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THE OFFICIAL GAMES MAGAZINE OF BEST BUY®

# @Gamer

ISSUE 011 | JULY/AUGUST 2011

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**ROBIN DLC PACK**  
**AT BEST BUY**  
SEE PG. 58

MAKE YOUR  
OWN BATMAN  
FIGURE!  
PG. 55

## BATMAN ARKHAM CITY

BIGGER IN SIZE! MORE VILLAINS! NEW HEROES!

JOIN US FOR THE PREVIEW EVENT OF THE SUMMER



**MEOW!**  
GUESS WHO'S  
A PLAYABLE  
CHARACTER?

**Resident Evil  
Raccoon City**  
A whole new perspective  
on zombies. PG. 20

**Uncharted 3:  
Drake's Deception**  
Will Nathan Drake's new quest  
be his last? PG. 40

**Sony Ericsson  
Xperia PLAY**  
A real phone made for real gamers?  
We'll be the judge of that! PG. 90

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BUY**

**Future**

# DEAD OR ALIVE<sup>®</sup> Dimensions

*"Looks damn good...gorgeous for a handheld."*

**-destructoid.com**

*"The fighting was fast, fluid, and accurate,  
and the level of graphical detail was impressive."*

**-GameSpot**

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**DEAD OR ALIVE** | **I'm a fighter**  
[teamninja-studio.com/doadimensions/us/](http://teamninja-studio.com/doadimensions/us/)

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Violence

In this  
ISSUE**\$120 WORTH OF COUPONS INSIDE!**

\*Expires Dec. 31. See store for details. \*Excludes digital content. \*Excludes some items. \*Excludes some items. \*Excludes some items.



► **Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City**  
Someone has to defend the Umbrella Corporation.

I GOT THIS!

COVER  
STORY52 **BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY**

Super villains? Check. Sexy heroine? Check. Awesome sidekick? Check. We take you on a tour of Arkham City.



86

## Gear galore!

We take our gadgets seriously, and so should you. From a 70-inch LED LCD HDTV to the new Sony Ericsson gaming phone, we've got you covered.

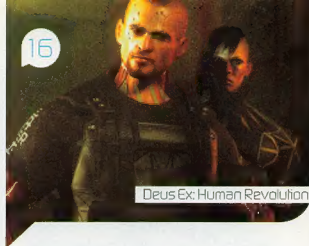


06

**E3 2011**

We headed to LA to try to make sense of all the madness that is E3. Turn to page 6 to check out what we uncovered.





Deus Ex: Human Revolution

## Previews

- 16 Deus Ex: Human Revolution**  
We like science, but when it messes with your essential humanity things get weird.
- 20 Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City**  
We can't wait for this team-based shooter.
- 24 Driver: San Francisco**  
The streets of San Francisco come alive in this exciting open world.
- 27 Rocksmith**  
Music gaming isn't dead.
- 28 Dead Island**  
We've all seen the trailer. Awesome! But how does the game actually look?
- 34 Catherine**  
Faced with a philosopher's dilemma, which way would you go?
- 36 Asura's Wrath**  
Asian mythology and sci-fi come together.
- 38 The Last Guardian**  
Any game with a huge cat/bird beast is OK in our book.
- 40 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception**  
We get the skinny on one of the year's most anticipated titles.
- 44 Silent Hill: Downpour**  
You're gonna want to leave the lights on when you play this horror sequel.
- 46 The Darkness II**  
Adult themes abound in this sequel to the cult shooter hit.
- 48 Prey 2**  
New everything gives this franchise a facelift.
- 50 Tera**  
This promising MMORPG may just pan out.



Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City



Dead Island



Brink



Cars 2

## NEWS: FIRST TO KNOW

### 04 STAFF

Who's in charge of this crazy thing, anyway?

### 06 NEWS

All the news that's fit to print happened at E3. Luckily, we were there to cover it all!

### 14 CALENDAR

Release dates? Well yes, actually, we do need them.

### 12 IPAD GAMES

You've got an iPad. We've got gaming expertise on tap.

## Top Picks

**ALICE: MADNESS RETURNS** 62  
Lewis Carroll's tale takes a dark and twisted turn.

**TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON** 66  
Autobots vs. Decepticons...again.

**THE LEGEND OF ZELDA** 67  
Zelda gets the 3DS treatment. How does it rate?

**CHILD OF EDEN** 68  
Fans of *Rez* can't contain their excitement. But how does *Child of Eden* compare? We review it.

**SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED** 70  
Get ready for some nice wholesome demon hunting.

**BRINK** 72  
Brink scores big in style. But does it have substance?

**DUNGEON SIEGE III** 74  
How does one of the best RPGs of all time hold up to the comp?

**FABLE III (PC)** 76  
Xbox 360 gamers got first stab at *Fable III*. Now we review the PC version.

**THE WITCHER 2** 77  
Return as Geralt of Rivia in this truly amazing PC-only sequel.

**CARS 2** 78  
Just in time for its theatrical release, *Cars 2* hits the DS.

**SIX MINI-REVIEWS!** 79  
*Resident Evil*, *Sims 3*, *Sniper: Ghost Warrior* and many more!





## MEET THE STAFF



**Andy Eddy** Executive Editor  
The group's veteran, Andy Eddy has been prepping for E3 (he's only missed one). If you're wondering, his preparations involve copious amounts of water and epsom salts.



**Steve Klett** Editor-at-Large  
When he's not preparing to launch the new Android media app, NVISION, Steve still likes to while away his time making sure our Gear section is up to snuff. Thanks, Steve!



**Andy "Steak" Salisbury** Associate Editor  
Steak has decided to leave the @GAMER family and return to Seattle. That's okay, though, since he'll be working for Warner Bros. Interactive—so we expect to get hooked up.



**Jenny Esdaile** Art Director  
Halfway between here and her native Australia, Jenny spent yet another week lounging on a Hawaiian beach drinking Mai Tais. We're thrilled—and surprised—she came back to us.



**Jillian Pierce** Designer  
Jillian has been planning what seems like the Wedding of the Century for...forever. And by the time you read this, the "JP" wedding" will have happened. (Congrats from all of us!)

## Letter from the EDITOR

WELCOME TO

@GAMER



**T**his is my favorite time of the year. Not only is my birthday in July, but this is when we all get to descend upon L.A. for the annual Electronics Entertainment Expo (E3). Last year when we attended E3, we had just completed the first issue of @GAMER. And while we were all super-excited about it, we were also curious as to how the rest of the industry would receive our baby. Well, here we are a year later, and @GAMER is going strong. Our circulation is growing rapidly, and more and more of you are taking advantage of those awesome coupons that we give you each month. Another great thing about not only surviving that first year, but also thriving, is that publishers don't see us as some upstart. Rather, they're ever eager to help us get cutting-edge information.

Which is where our cover story comes in. We were stoked to visit Warner Bros. Interactive to get a look at Batman: Arkham City, and give you all a peek at what you can expect when you visit this "vacation" spot later this fall.

**William O'Neal**  
Editor-in-Chief

## QR CODES AND HOW THEY WORK

Throughout the magazine you'll notice QR codes for some of the games. Simply install a QR reader for your smartphone (or install the Best Buy app for iPhone or Android), aim it at the QR code, and you'll be taken to a trailer for the game you just scanned.



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Online: www.futureus.com



**LEGAL STUFF**  
@GAMER (ISSN 2160-469X) is published 10 times a year by Future US, Inc., 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080, USA. Basic subscription rates: one year (10 issues) US \$14.99. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to @GAMER, P.O. Box 5851, Harlan, IA 51593-1351. Future US, Inc. also publishes *Crochet Today!*, *Guitar Aficionado*, *Guitar World*, *Knitting Today!*, *MacLife*, *Maximum PC*, *Nintendo Power*, *The Official Xbox Magazine*, *PlayStation: The Official Magazine*, *PC Gamer*, *Revolver*, *Windows: The Official Magazine*, and *World of Warcraft Official Magazine*. Entire contents copyright 2011, Future US, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of @GAMER. Products named in the pages of @GAMER are trademarks of their respective companies. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

@GAMER is published in association with Best Buy.

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▲ Cole and the boys ponder, "Do we look better on PlayStation 3 or Xbox 360?"

→ I finally got around to reading the May 2011 issue (good stuff) and you guys did something great in your review of Portal 2. You had a small section where you asked the question, "PS3, Xbox 360, or PC?" I own all the systems, so getting your opinion on which system is better for a multiplatform game would be very informative. Just a thought!

—Alex W. via email

ED: And a great thought it is. With more gamers owning multiple platforms, having a breakout of

how a particular game differs across its various versions is a great resource. The problem is, we aren't always able to look at—and usually aren't provided with—multiple versions of a game in time for such details to be included in the review.

However, we will make more of an effort to get publishers to help us out in this research, so that we can make sure you're a more educated consumer. We'll also try to include in other platform-specific differences, such as when

exclusive content is being offered (a good example is the extra case that came with the PS3 version of L.A. Noire) or anything else that might influence your buying decisions.

→ In issue #10, you reviewed L.A. Noire and on page 59 gave it a score of 4.75. Then in the same issue on page 85 in the "A-Z of @GAMER Ratings" you have L.A. Noire listed with a score of 4.25. I love the game and I hope the 4.75 score is the accurate one. Which is the correct score?

—Don C. via email

ED: OK, we're busted. The Typo Police have cuffed us and are hauling us to the 10-Key Typing Prison.

The review has the correct score...the game did indeed get a 4.75, and the "review index" score was mistyped. We promise never to make mistakes again...uh, we hope.

→ Your article on PAX East in the May issue was cool, and it makes me want to go to the next one. When is it?

—JB via email

ED: Well, there's some good news...and some bad news. The good news is, there's a PAX show in Seattle—called PAX Prime—that's being held August 26–28. The bad news? The people who put it on announced in late May that it's a total sellout. Your best bet is to plan further ahead for a future one: The Prime show info is detailed at the [prime.paxsite.com](http://prime.paxsite.com) website, while the East Coast version is at [east.paxsite.com](http://east.paxsite.com).

If you like id Software and its game wares (such as Doom, Quake, and the forthcoming Rage), you might be interested in checking out QuakeCon, which is being held August 4–7 in Dallas. It's a free fanfest that the developer has been holding since 1996, with game competitions, panel discussions, a big LAN party, and more. Check [quakecon.org](http://quakecon.org) for more info.

## BEST BUY CUSTOMER REVIEWS & RATINGS

### WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

What are you playing now? Do you like it? Do you hate it? Let the other @GAMER readers know what you think—send in a short 50–100-word review to [reviews@atgamer magazine.com](mailto:reviews@atgamer magazine.com), and we'll repost some of them here each issue.

Submit your review to:  
[reviews@atgamer magazine.com](mailto:reviews@atgamer magazine.com)

## GAMING TRENDS, 140 CHARACTERS AT A TIME

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us!



TWEETER: WIL O'NEAL TWITTER: @WONEAL  
 → I need to finish *Red Dead Redemption* and *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*. Just saying is all.



TWEETER: ANDY EDDY TWITTER: @VIOGAMES  
 → Finally had a chance to open this box...hey, someone sent me an ocinal! Oh, and there's a game in here, too. Yeah, it's about time...



TWEETER: LIZZIE CUEVAS TWITTER: @LIZZIECUEVAS  
 → Games like *Shadows of the Damned*, *Catherine*, and *Alice: Madness Returns* have really been catching my interest lately. Must be the nightmares.



TWEETER: MITCH DYER TWITTER: @MITCHDY  
 → I have never loved a game as much as I've disliked it as much as #LANoire. So much irritates me, but I'm compelled to keep going.

## PODCAST [atgamerpodcast.com](http://atgamerpodcast.com)

[Tune in for the latest information about the games industry from the front lines.]

## DEAD SPACE EXTRACTION

A nice stab at making a lengthy, full-featured light-gun game. Combat mixes cold strategy and straight-up blasting that grows addictive. The story has a few genuine scares and emotional moments. Chapters can be played in convenient 40-minute chunks; and alternate paths, collectibles, and a challenge mode make it worth multiple playthroughs. It's also dirt cheap. What's not to love?

Score: 4.5/5

—James





# TOP 10 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Words: William O'Neal, Andy Eddy, and Chuck Osborn • Photos: Brad Bretz, [www.bretzphoto.com](http://www.bretzphoto.com)

**T**he Electronics Entertainment Expo (E3) is in many ways like a living organism. Since it first began in 1995, it's gone through myriad changes as forces in the industry have attempted to tame this beast. As it's grown, publishers have tried to control it by limiting access and even changing the venue. They've even gone so far, in past years,

to disallow "booth babes." Having failed to control E3, it seems that we've all come to accept the show for what it is: Big. Awesome. Loud. Tiresome. Fun. Necessary.

While the final number for attendees was around 50,000, some predictions said that E3 2011 would be the biggest show ever. While these predictions fell short, the show was

plenty entertaining. But enough about all of that—you all want to know what we thought of the games that we saw.

We spent three days scouring the floor of the L.A. Convention Center to get mucho hands-on time with our favorite games. We decided to whittle it down to the 10 things that most impressed us about the show. ©



### @GAMER IN THE HOUSE!

We're so fly! In addition to all of the craziness that is E3, Future gave away a brand-new Smart Car. All you had to do was visit the booth, don these red Future glasses, and hit us up with a Twitpic.



NOT MANY GAME Demos end with a spontaneous burst of applause

WE SPENT THREE DAYS Scouring the LA Convention center



## 1 THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

Publisher: Bethesda • Developer: Bethesda

Not many game demos end with a spontaneous burst of applause from the audience. A smattering, maybe, but few that rival the reaction to the behind-closed-doors presentation of *Skyrim* by game director Todd Howard at this year's E3.

Howard took us on a too-brief tour of *Skyrim*, the northernmost province of the land of Tamriel, to show off the game's many features. Powered by the Creation engine, a completely rewritten version of the underlying code behind *Oblivion*, the RPG boasts one of the most detailed worlds we've seen in a game, showing off every speck of *Skyrim*'s snow-swept mountainous region. Another crowd-pleaser is that you won't choose a character class such as warrior or spellcaster at the outset of the game, but will have access to 18 different skills that you can use as you like. As you use them, you become more proficient at those skills, letting you be whatever you play.



Dragons are the beasts of choice in *Skyrim*. As a Dragon Lord, you absorb their power after slaying one. There can be only one!

## 2 STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC

Publisher: LucasArts/EA • Developer: BioWare

With the lofty promise of "changing the face of MMOs as we know it" (as BioWare claimed during its E3 demo), *The Old Republic* looks like it may actually do just that. Blending the epic story-oriented nature of its single-player RPGs with a massively multiplayer world, BioWare is creating a different type of MMO, one in which your dialogue and player choices will actually affect your

story. The game's eight classes will each have their own unique stories and paths, which means that you can restart the game with a new character class and have a completely new experience. It's the best of both worlds—a deep single-player experience with all the bonuses of MMOs like PvP combat, harvesting, guild play, crafting, auction houses, and raids. And did we mention that every single line of dialogue is voice-acted?

PR Manager Yoda says: "Buy or do not—there is no refund on your purchase, only exchange."



## SWEET!

Celebrity appearances have always been a big part of E3. In 2011, celebrities were around new products they're involved in. In other cases, they're there because they're gamers. That would explain why, while I wait waiting...

just a few text

Heder (Napoleon Dynamite) who was playing the character Lord



MASS EFFECT 3



## 3 MASS EFFECT 3

Publisher: EA • Developer: BioWare

If you've played either of the first two games in the series, then the inclusion of *Mass Effect 3* in this list is a no-brainer. The final episode in the trilogy will bring Commander Shepard's epic storyline to a conclusion as the ancient alien race of Reapers invades the galaxy, devastating everything in their path.

The surprise announcement at this year's E3 was that *Mass Effect 3* will also support voice recognition on Xbox 360 through Kinect. You'll be able to respond to dialogue choices with your own voice and bark orders to your companions in combat. Don't own Kinect? No problem, classic gamepad controls are still available. But *Mass Effect 3* promises to be the toughest game in the series, so you may need any extra help you can get when it's released on March 6, 2012.



Many familiar faces from the first two games will return, probably to be killed, in *Mass Effect 3*.

## 4 BIOSHOCK INFINITE

Publisher: 2K Games • Developer: Irrational Games

Among the many reasons to go into the VIP lounge of 2K Games booth (sports bar, free snacks) was the giant statue of Songbird, the mysterious villain of *BioShock Infinite*. Playing as former Pinkerton agent Booker DeWitt, you'll be sent to the floating city of Columbia to rescue Elizabeth, a woman who has been imprisoned there by the birdlike mechanical being Songbird since she was a girl.

Inside 2K's private theater, we were given an action-packed peek into this all-new environment, a marked departure from the undersea environs of the first two games. You'll traverse this high-rising city in the clouds by zipping along a network of Sky-Lines with a grappling hook, battling members of the warring factions of The Founders and Vox Populi, while also trying to bring Elizabeth back home. Embodying the philosophy of U.S. exceptionalism, the city is a visual feast of red, white, and blue Americana and steampunk-style engineering. You'll have to wait until 2012 to play this one, unfortunately.



YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL 2012 TO PLAY THIS ONE



THE  
SHOWING  
BROUGHT  
More questions  
than answers

## 5 Wii U

Nintendo's E3 press briefing was highly anticipated, and the game giant didn't disappoint by revealing a new console called Wii U. While the console was mostly kept under wraps, the system's interesting controller wasn't. The device is like a tablet, complete with a 6.2-inch screen. The showing brought more questions than an-

swers—no pricing or its HD specs were given, and we got no release date beyond “next year”—but a number of prototypes demonstrated its viability. One had four Wii Remote users chasing the tablet user through a maze, and the tablet offered a view of the overhead map to help the player avoid the pursuers.

The Wii U was quite a surprise—though the expectation is that the tablet-like controllers could be quite pricey.

## 6 BATTLEFIELD 3

Publisher: EA • Developer: DICE

While titles like *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3* and *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier* showed a lot of promise, *Battlefield 3* was a huge hit with the shooter fans in attendance. From the first time the trailer was shown at Microsoft's press conference to the massive lines that people were willing to wait in to see the game, it seems that *Battlefield 3* was the game that shooter fans were the most excited about. We got some hands-on time in *Battlefield 3* and got to participate in a multiplayer match that took place in Paris. The level started off outside before going underground, and this change in environments did a great job of showing off DICE's Frostbite Engine 2. *Battlefield 3* ships on October 25th (two weeks before *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3*), with a live beta beginning on September 11.

There's no denying that the new engine is really gorgeous. Look at the advanced gun-rendering.

BATTLEFIELD  
3 WAS A





THE QUESTION IS: Will the game be good?

## 7 BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive  
Developer: Rocksteady Studios

Batman who? The star of the show at WBIE's Batman booth was Catwoman, the sexy feline thief who operates on the cutting edge of the law. Visitors were able to sample some of Catwoman's unique moves, including her lithe fighting style that is punctuated with face-scratches and the occasional smooch on an unsuspecting enemy's lips.

With Catwoman a playable character in her own Challenge mode missions and 10% of the single-player game, her presence at the show (not to mention a new trailer that focuses almost exclusively on her body) injected the game with a measure of sex appeal that the Dark Knight has never been able to muster on his lonesome.

The question is, will the game be good? For the answer to that question, flip ahead to our eight-page feature on *Batman: Arkham City* on p.52.



Batman's ready, the night is dark and night catwoman is ready. Batman's bat-thunder.

## 8 FAR CRY 3

Publisher: Ubisoft  
Developer: Ubisoft

*Far Cry 3* introduces us to Jason Brody, stranded on a strange island, his girlfriend missing and...well...everyone else on the island seems to be totally insane. "Do you know the definition of insanity?" This is how the *Far Cry 3* trailer opened and closed. Of course, in between, all kinds of insanity ensued. You're tied to a concrete brick and tossed into an underwater cave. You see unarmed men and women being executed by a ruthless band of not-so-nice guys. You get yourself a gun and proceed to inflict pain on the not-so-nice guys only to commandeer a helicopter. But alas, you're shot down and are once again face to face with your nemesis, Voss, the fella who asked you if you know the definition of insanity. Arguably one of the biggest surprises of the show, Ubisoft's ultra-violent shooter looks promising.

"DO YOU KNOW THE definition of insanity?"



Missed a bit in the middle there, fellas.



LA VITA LOCO?



THE DEVICE IS A BIG LEAP



## 9 PS VITA

Previously referred to under the working title of "NGP" (next-generation portable), Sony's press briefing revealed the actual product name of PlayStation Vita. The device is a big leap ahead of the existing PSP/ PSP Go. It features a touch screen, as well as a touch-sensitive backplate—though we expect it'll take some

work for players to get used to that. PS Vita is expected out for this holiday season with two price points: \$250 for the Wi-Fi-only version or \$300 for the 3G/Wi-Fi model (with Sony announcing that AT&T is the 3G partner—something that brought numerous jeers from the audience at the briefing).

The PS Vita's near-touch screen required a grip change to hold the device, but the indentations on either side should be helpful guides.



THE TRADE SHOW HAD

## 10 THE SPECTACLE THAT IS E3

After it was over, the ESA (Entertainment Software Association) announced attendance figures of nearly 47,000, which is somewhat lower than previous years. However, on the show floor it was clear that E3 is once again an "event" that can't be ignored. Celebrities posing for pictures; loud presentations; trailers on big screens (some crossing a panorama of screens); t-shirts, posters, and other trinkets thrown around like candy; and, yes, more booth babes than you could shake a controller at. The trade show had plenty of spectacle, which led to lots of mainstream media coverage. Best of all, there were tons of new games to check out and try.

E3 is all about interactivity, so it's no surprise the booth babes were interactive, too.



## Featured Game:

## QUEST ON

The campaign is massive, with dozens of side quests and optional skirmishes to tackle. Multiplayer is just icing on the cake.



## PUZZLE QUEST 2

\$4.99

Nanco, [nancobandalgames.com](http://nancobandalgames.com)

If you remember *Puzzle Quest*, which spliced the match-three puzzle formula with elements of a role-playing game, *Puzzle Quest 2* is more of the same, but it's cranked up the "epic" dial. The environments are lush, the spells and items are all new, the visual effects are improved, and a host of brand-new minigames keep the monotony of match-three at bay. Besides the single-player campaign there are four other modes, including a multiplayer mode that lets you take your hero into battle against a friend over local Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, or an opponent from Game Center.

Fact: Bears are tough to beat.



Leap from cloud to cloud, taking out birds.



## UNPLEASANT HORSE

Free  
4th and Battery,  
[4thandbattery.com](http://4thandbattery.com)

Free and universal, *Unpleasant Horse* is from PopCap's new "experimental" label, 4th and Battery. It was the result of an exercise where PopCap employees drew a random game name out of a hat and tried to make it in 24 hours. Rejected by Apple at first for its excessive gore, you get along by grinding pegasuses (pegasi?) into blood and bones. Gross, but at heart it's just a one-button flyer racing through the sky.

Al, I wanna do is zooma zoom right through.

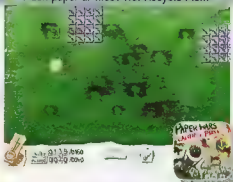


## MOS SPEEDRUN

\$1.99  
Physmo, [physmo.com](http://physmo.com)

*Mos Speedrun* makes me think of the Batman song: "Na na na na, na na na na, Plat! Form!" It's fast-paced platforming fun, with your little 8-bit bug racing through 20 levels (with more promised via updates) avoiding zombies, bees, and certain doom. You can choose between onscreen buttons or a D-pad, but just know you'll die a lot...and you won't care. Plus, it's universal so you can also play on an iPhone or iPod touch.

Trash paper armies? No! Recycle them

PAPER WARS:  
CANNON FODDER HD

\$2.99  
iFun4all, [ifun4all.com](http://ifun4all.com)

Don't believe your eyes—the graphics consist of 2D hand-drawn scrawls on what looks like torn-out paper. But this is serious tower defense, with more than 80 levels and hundreds of medals and achievements to earn. With 15 enemy types the difficulty ramps up quickly, but luckily you get power-ups to keep blasting them back. Two additional unlockable modes keep things interesting, and a robust achievements and stat-tracking system tickles my nerd bones.

Stand back and let Avatar Aang handle it.



## BATTLEHEART

\$9.99  
Mika Mobile, [mikamobile.com](http://mikamobile.com)

Another universal app, this one is an action-RPG featuring fantasy characters locked in adorable combat. It's definitely on the light side, with no repercussions for a loss, and a stripped-down system that feels like "role-playing for newbs." But the unique cartoonish looks lends it some charm, and it's fun to get new equipment and skills, and to hire new characters in the tavern. It just might be too casual for hardcore roleplayers.

Please, for the love of all that is good and wholesome, don't drop the baby panda.



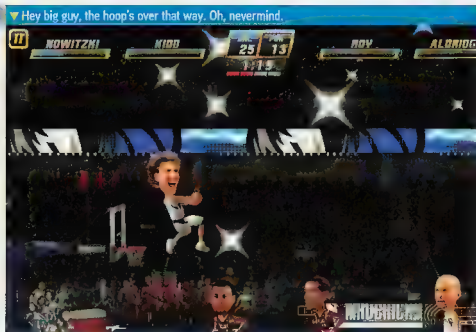
## SMUGGLE TRUCK HD

\$2.99

Owlchemy Labs, [smuggletruck.com](http://smuggletruck.com)



This was supposed to be *Smuggle Truck*, a physics racer in which you tried to get as many undocumented immigrants over the border as you could, without them bouncing out of your truck. And it wasn't controversy for controversy's sake—the developers' friends were having trouble getting green cards, so they wanted to highlight their struggle. Well, it was rejected, so now it's *Smuggle Truck*, and you're transporting cuddly animals to the zoo. But the physics still rock, and it's a blast to play.



## NBA JAM BY EA SPORTS FOR IPAD

\$9.99

Electronic Arts, [ea.com/ipad](http://ea.com/ipad)



You probably played this on a console back in the day—well, don't worry, this port is as faithful as it is fun. The touch controls are a breeze, the rosters update accurately, the monster dunks are as thrilling as ever, and you can even take on a pal in local multiplayer. It's got tons of unlockables you can earn yourself or buy, including old-school stars. What else can you say but, "Boorishakalaka!"

## Mobile Beats for 'Travelin' Feels

MUSIC IS FUN

# THE BEAT GOES ON

Ever since *Guitar Hero* and *DDR* showed us how fun keeping a beat can be, we've been getting funky to music games. But you can't play *Rock Band* on an iPad, can you? Oh yes you can.



01 **PULSE: VOLUME ONE** (\$4.99, [cipherprime.com](http://cipherprime.com))

As the pulse extends out, you tap the circles. It's so basic they don't even explain it to you, but it's also soothing, exhilarating and addictive in a way I can't explain either. Must play.



02 **RERAVE** (\$1.99, [rerave.com](http://rerave.com))

This universal techno beat-tapper comes with three songs, and two additional downloadable song packs are free (other song packs are 99 cents to \$2.99 via in-app purchase).



03 **BEAT.TRIP BEAT HD** (\$0.99, [namcobandal.com](http://namcobandal.com))

Basically a rhythmic version of *Pong*, *Beat.Trip Beat HD* oozes 8-bit style and can be played with the accelerometer or a single touch. Local and multiplayer modes let you take the show on the road.



04 **PONG BEATS** (\$0.99, [pongbeats.com](http://pongbeats.com))

This is also rhythmic *Pong*—the name admits it outright. But with classical piano music and notes that zig and zag all over the screen, it's plenty challenging, and strangely compelling, too.



05 **MIXXMUSE ARCADE HD** (free, [mixxmuse.com](http://mixxmuse.com))

It's not exactly intuitive, but this app combines a career mode (basically a DJ-like game with tapping and swiping to a song) and a freestyle mode where you can make your own tracks.



06 **MUBLIP** (\$1.99, [mublip.com](http://mublip.com))

Universal *MuBliP* is like a rhythm version of *Simon*; you copy the patterns of swipes, taps, holds, and more, while keeping up with the track. It's harder than it sounds, but it sounds pretty darn good.



07 **ROCK BAND RELOADED FOR IPAD** (\$9.99, [ea.com/ipad](http://ea.com/ipad))

Play guitar, bass, drums, or vocals in World Tour or Quick Play modes, take on a friend in splitscreen Versus, or get a whole band together over local Wi-Fi. Simply put, this rocks.



08 **TOUCH DANCE 2 FOR IPAD** (free, [touchdance.com](http://touchdance.com))

This is like *Dance Dance Revolution* for your fingers. It's free to try but you need to pony up \$3.99 for access to the "routines," plus own the songs in question. Then get down, finger style.



09 **TUNE NINJA** (free, [mobiax.com](http://mobiax.com))

The graphics are the lowest-rent you've ever seen, but it's fun for top 40 fanatics—the game plays you a preview of an iTunes top 25 song, and you guess which one. At least it's free.

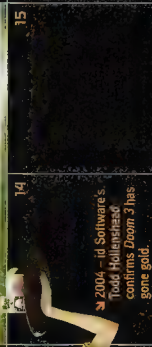
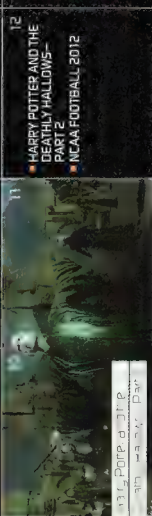
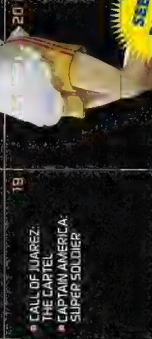
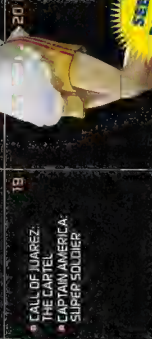
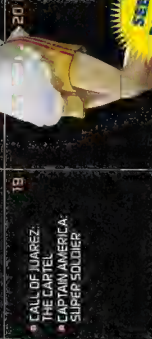


10 **SLAYER PINBALL ROCKS HD** (\$2.99, [pinballrocks.com](http://pinballrocks.com))

This isn't exactly a music game, but it's a Slayer pinball table that plays Slayer. The details and physics are spot-on, the rhythm minigames are fun, and it's freakin' Slayer, man.

## JULY 2011

Game Release Date This day in videogame history

| Sunday                                                                                                                       | Monday                                                                                                              | Tuesday                                                                                   | Wednesday                                                                                                                         | Thursday                                                                                | Friday                                                                                   | Saturday                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 02<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1992 - Billy Mitchell scores his first perfect 3,333,360 points.</li> </ul>     | 03<br><b>INDEPENDENCE DAY</b><br> | 04<br>   | 05<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EARTH DEFENSE FORCE: INSECT ARMAGEDDON</li> </ul>                                    | 06<br> | 07<br>  | 08<br>  |
| 09<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2004 - id Software's Todd Hollenshead confirms Doom 3 has gone gold.</li> </ul> | 10<br>                            | 11<br>  | 12<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS - PART 2</li> <li>NCAA FOOTBALL 2012</li> </ul> | 13<br> | 14<br>  | 15<br> |
| 16<br>                                     | 17<br>                            | 18<br> | 19<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CALL OF DUTY: THE CATALAN</li> <li>CAPTAIN AMERICA: SUPER SOLDIER</li> </ul>         | 20<br> | 21<br>  | 22<br> |
| 23<br>                                     | 24<br>                            | 25<br> | 26<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CATHERINE</li> <li>PACMAN &amp; CALAGA DIMENSIONS</li> </ul>                         | 27<br> | 28<br>  | 29<br> |
| 30<br>                                     | 31<br>                            | 32<br> | 33<br>                                           | 34<br> | 35<br> | 36<br> |

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# AUGUST 2011

Game Release Date ▶ This day in videogame history

| Sunday |    | Monday                                                                            |  | Tuesday                                  |  | Wednesday                                                                                              |  | Thursday                                                                                               |  | Friday                                                                                                 |  | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|--------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 07     | 08 | 01                                                                                |  | 02                                       |  | 03                                                                                                     |  | 04                                                                                                     |  | 05                                                                                                     |  | 06                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|        |    | <p>▶ 1993 - Nintendo launches Super Mario All-Stars for Super NES in the U.S.</p> |  | <p>▶ NO MORE HEROES! HEROES PARADISE</p> |  | <p>QUAKE CON 2011 AUGUST 4-7 2011 HILTON AMARILLO, DALLAS TX</p>                                       |  | <p>▶ 1995 - The first <i>Mortal Kombat</i> movie, starring Christopher Lambert, debuts in the U.S.</p> |  | <p>▶ 2000 - Nintendo debuts GameCube and Game Boy Advance at its Spaceworld show in Japan.</p>         |  | <p><b>ARE YOU A PREORDER PROP?</b><br/>If you want to keep tabs on all of the preorder specials that Best Buy and game publishers love put together, just scan this QR code with your smartphone. One webpage will tell all!</p> |  |
| 14     | 15 | 09                                                                                |  | 10                                       |  | 11                                                                                                     |  | 12                                                                                                     |  | 13                                                                                                     |  | 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|        |    | <p>▶ NICK TOONS MLB</p>                                                           |  | <p>▶ CAVE STORY 3D</p>                   |  | <p>▶ 1995 - The first <i>Mortal Kombat</i> movie, starring Christopher Lambert, debuts in the U.S.</p> |  | <p>▶ 1995 - The first <i>Mortal Kombat</i> movie, starring Christopher Lambert, debuts in the U.S.</p> |  | <p>▶ 1995 - The first <i>Mortal Kombat</i> movie, starring Christopher Lambert, debuts in the U.S.</p> |  | <p>▶ 1995 - The first <i>Mortal Kombat</i> movie, starring Christopher Lambert, debuts in the U.S.</p>                                                                                                                           |  |
| 21     | 22 | 16                                                                                |  | 17                                       |  | 18                                                                                                     |  | 19                                                                                                     |  | 20                                                                                                     |  | 21                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|        |    | <p>▶ DRIVER: RENEGADE</p>                                                         |  | <p>▶ DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO</p>           |  | <p>▶ JAMES BOND: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH</p>                                                           |  | <p>▶ JAMES BOND: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH</p>                                                           |  | <p>▶ JAMES BOND: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH</p>                                                           |  | <p>▶ JAMES BOND: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH</p>                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| 28     | 29 | 23                                                                                |  | 24                                       |  | 25                                                                                                     |  | 26                                                                                                     |  | 27                                                                                                     |  | 28                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|        |    | <p>▶ DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION</p>                                                |  | <p>▶ DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION</p>       |  | <p>▶ DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION</p>                                                                     |  | <p>▶ DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION</p>                                                                     |  | <p>▶ DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION</p>                                                                     |  | <p>▶ DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION</p>                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| 35     | 36 | 30                                                                                |  | 31                                       |  | 32                                                                                                     |  | 33                                                                                                     |  | 34                                                                                                     |  | 35                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|        |    | <p>▶ TROPIC 4</p>                                                                 |  | <p>▶ TROPIC 4</p>                        |  | <p>▶ TROPIC 4</p>                                                                                      |  | <p>▶ TROPIC 4</p>                                                                                      |  | <p>▶ TROPIC 4</p>                                                                                      |  | <p>▶ TROPIC 4</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |

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# DEUS EX:

## HUMAN REVOLUTION

► Mech 1, Humans 0. Luckily, mechanical foes are vulnerable to a specialized subset of your abilities.

The futuristic shooter blends strategy and action to create a smart, electrifying experience • Words: Evan Narcisse

**A**ny game bearing the words "Deus Ex" has a storied legacy to live up to. The original *Deus Ex* changed the way people thought about action games. The complex plot had UN anti-terrorist agent JC Denton uncovering a deep and ancient conspiracy; you could craft a playstyle—stealthy or combat-centric—and decisions at key points affected the way your story unfolded. 10 years later it's still beloved for its unprecedented depth and its hard-edged cyberpunk vision.

Now, the series returns to PCs and consoles with a prequel, *Human Revolution*

happens 25 years before the first *Deus Ex*, showing the beginnings of the cyborg technology that gave JC Denton his special skills. You play as Adam Jensen, a private security agent for Sarif Industries, a cybernetic research company pioneering the grafting of human and machine. An attack on Sarif HQ leaves Jensen badly wounded. However, Adam survives when his boss and his employees implant bionic augmentations into

his body, making him stronger and faster than normal humans.

An early mission sends Adam into a besieged Sarif research facility in Milwaukee. He's tasked with retrieving an important research prototype but, at this stage of the game, Adam hasn't really received any upgrades. Nevertheless, in true *Deus Ex* fashion, I was immediately given a choice as to whether to take on the thugs directly

### THE HOSTAGE SITUATION AT THE END IS WHAT REALLY DAZZLED ME

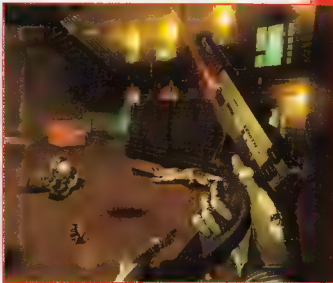


**BAD SCENE**  
Oh man, these  
dudes have  
bullets and  
lasers thingies.

**CORNERED**  
The new cover  
system lets you  
lay low and pop  
out when the time  
is right.

## PLUG AND PLAY

Adam Jensen's augmentations aren't the only things you can upgrade. You'll also be able to modify pistols with sights and silencers to make them quieter and more accurate. Weapons and other inventory items can be mapped onto the D-pad for quick access.



## AUGMENTED ENVIRONMENTS

Unlike the original *Deus Ex*, *Human Revolution* lets you use cover during a gunfight. But, the clever enemy AI will outflank you if you hold any position too long. If you want to play like you did back in the day without sticky cover, you can disable the new system in the options menu.



**LESS THAN HUMAN...OR MORE? \\\**



in a firefight with a rifle or shotgun, or to work my way around them and pick them off quietly with a tranq pistol.

But as good as the action was, the hostage situation at the end of the level is what really dazzled me. Using a dialogue wheel similar to *Mass Effect*, you'll need to talk down an enemy holding a hostage. This part of *DX:HR* showed off excellent voice acting and great nuance in its dialogue trees. You get to see the full text of what you'll say and the choices feel organic. *Deus Ex* won the hearts of gamers everywhere with its multipath progression and moral ambiguity, and *Human Revolution* looks like it's going to be a great modern-day update. **B**

## BUILD TO WIN

Adam's almost-death and cyborg resurrection blurs the line between man and machine. You'll be able to augment tech in his head, torso, limbs, and other body parts with cloaking abilities, aim stabilization, and x-ray vision. Using augmentations drains your internal power supply, so you'll need to up your battery longevity, too.





## DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

### INFO

Publisher: Square Enix  
Developer: Eidos Montreal  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC  
MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE  
Single-player only

### GENRE

First-person shooter

### RELEASE DATE

August 23, 2011

### SUITABLE FOR

Fans of William Gibson, replicants, folks who want to pretend *DX2* never happened

## CAME DETAILS



HANDS-ON



### WHO TURNED ON THE LIGHTS?

Eidos Montreal's making sure that this *Deus Ex* looks like no other game out there. They've taken cues from the Italian Renaissance and mashed them up with the gritty futuristic cyberpunk of movies like *Blade Runner* and *The Matrix*. So, even in the heat of an explosive gunfight you'll be wowed by how gorgeous everything looks.

### PLAY YOUR WAY

You can try to play *Deus Ex* nonviolently, but folks always seem intent on shooting at you and blowing things up.

### WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

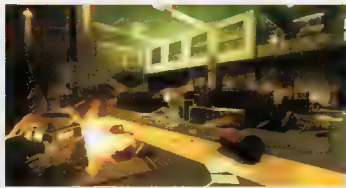
Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.



### GAMEPLAY \\\



▲ Certain upgrades will let you see when enemies drop out of alert states and go back to being unaware of your presence.



▲ Most environments will have routes that support frontal assaults as well as sneaky approaches.

### WHAT'S GREAT

- ♥ Cool cyberpunk art style
- ♥ Open-ended design lets you play your way

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT

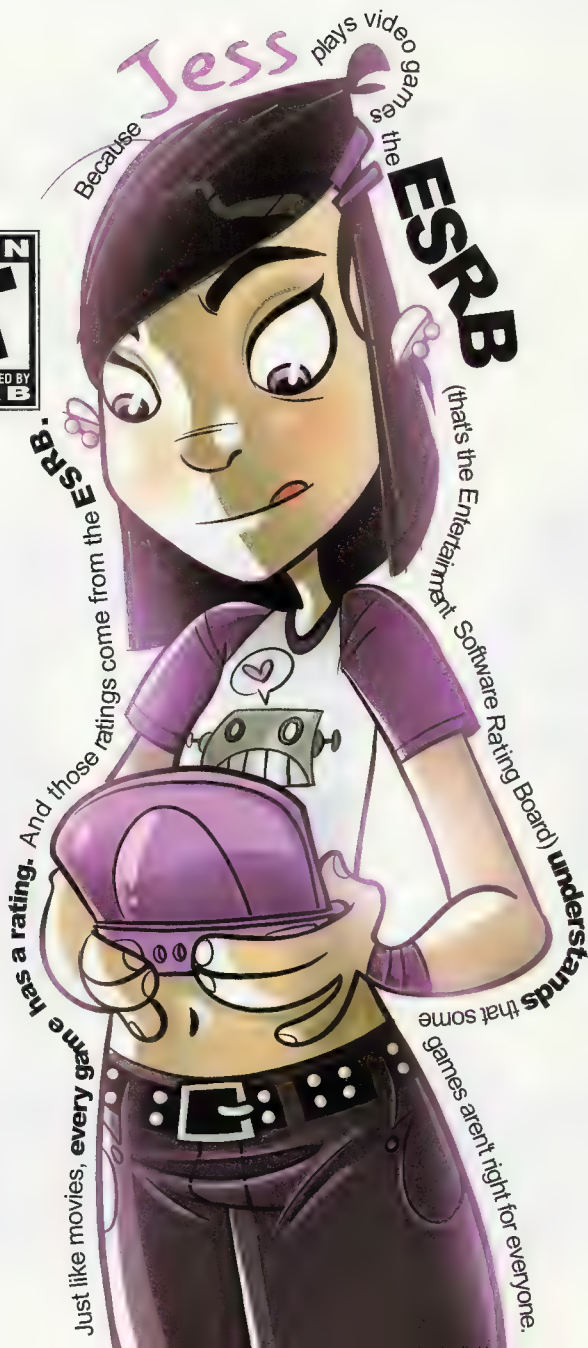
- ✖ Not truly an open-world game.
- ✖ Gets really, really talky at times



▲ Sarif Industries attracts the ire of the Purity First movement, which includes the freaky guy shown here. Purity First is an extremist anti-augmentation organization that's against using science to change how humankind evolves.

### A BUTTERFLY FLAPS ITS WINGS...

*Human Revolution's* four gameplay pillars—combat, hacking, social, and stealth—all contain enough depth for you to find unique solutions to gameplay objectives. And many choices you make have a ripple effect. Let an enemy live during a "chat combat" conversation sequence and they'll show up again later in the game, maybe even to help you out.



# RESIDENT EVIL: OPERATION RACCOON CITY

It's good to be bad! Words: Matt Cabral



**BELTWAY**

A hulking menace with a bionic leg, Beltway serves as Umbrella Security Service's demolitions expert. Plan on blowing stuff up real good behind his not-so-subtle arsenal.



**BERTHA**

The only female member of the USS, Bertha is the team's medic. Based on her affinity for surgical blades and bone saws, though, you probably don't want to be her patient.



**SPECTRE**

With a passion for high-tech gadgets, especially his multi-mode night vision goggles, the USS's sneaky Spectre could teach Sam Fisher a few neck-snapping tricks.



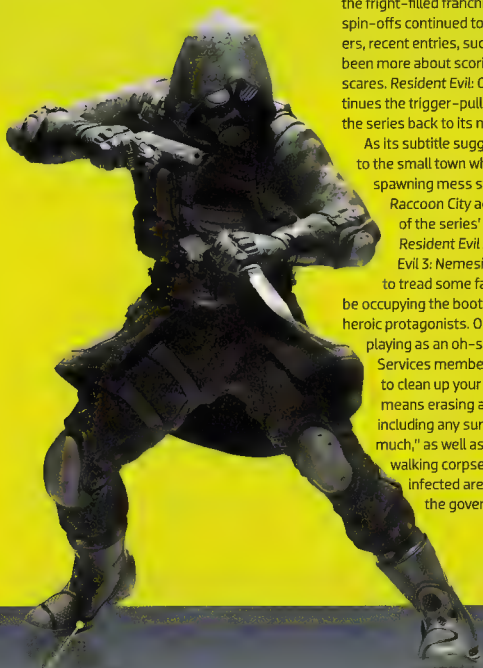
▲ A variety of physical and environmental threats ensure Raccoon City's a continuously evolving war zone.



▲ Flesh-craving creatures become the least of your worries when a U.S. military task force descends on Raccoon.



▲ Hunters do not discriminate: Whether you're a bad guy or a boy scout, they want to skin you alive.



As stealthy as he is scary, Vector is the USS's go-to for recon missions. Thanks to a shapeshifting mimicry ability, his targets don't see him until it's too late.

Capcom's long-running *Resident Evil* series established itself as the granddaddy of survival horror the second it sent that first virally infected canine crashing through the window over 15 years ago. While a number of the fright-filled franchise's early sequels and spin-offs continued to scare the pants off players, recent entries, such as *Resident Evil 5*, have been more about scoring headshots than eliciting scares. *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City* continues the trigger-pulling trend, but also brings the series back to its nerve-unraveling roots.

As its subtitle suggests, this chapter returns to the small town where the whole undead-spawning mess started. In fact, *Operation Raccoon City* actually revisits the events of the series' earliest entries, specifically *Resident Evil 2* and *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*. But while you can expect to tread some familiar ground, you won't be occupying the boots of the classic games' heroic protagonists. On the contrary, you'll be playing as an oh-so-evil Umbrella Security Services member, sent to the infected city to clean up your employer's mess. This means erasing all evidence of the outbreak, including any survivors who may "know too much," as well as all those T-Virus-carrying walking corpses. Of course, innocents and infected are the least of your worries; the government's also sent their

own military task force into the city to contain the situation and expose Umbrella for the sinister little buggers they are.

As one of four black-clad baddies, you'll unleash hot lead from behind high-tech hardware and execute up-close finishing moves from a third-person perspective. Using abilities and weapons strategically is integral, as enemy threats vary greatly, from the harmless foot-dragging braindead foes to supersoldiers boasting military skills that match your own. Oh, and let's not forget the wild card: Umbrella's Bio-Organic Weapons, boss baddies such as those Tyrants and Lickers that sent us running back to momma in previous *RE* games. These big bads occasionally show up on Raccoon City's streets to keep things interesting—and bloody.

You can tackle ORC's campaign by yourself, but the game's real hook is its four-player co-op. Much like *Left 4 Dead*, it encourages zombie-haters to face the threat with friends. The four USS members sport unique skills and specializations, nicely complementing each other to create a team dynamic. Still, if you choose to brave the corpse-crawling campaign yourself, you won't be totally alone; Umbrella's remaining undead-slaughtering trio will be directed by purportedly advanced AI. Whether solo or teamed-up, I can't wait to revisit Raccoon City as one of Umbrella's gun-toting psychopaths when ORC lands like a Tyrant's skull-squashing fist later this year. ☹

YOU'LL PLAY AS THE  
OH-SO-EVIL UMBRELLA  
SECURITY SERVICES,  
SENT TO CLEAN UP YOUR  
EMPLOYER'S MESS

Cars provide great cover...until their gas tanks blow up like a Fourth of July fireworks display.



Gray Malters; Brains spill, limbs fly, and entrails paint the streets in gore thanks to ORC's detail-drenched kill animations.



## THREE-PRONGED THREAT //

In addition to facing off against a highly trained U.S. military task force, Umbrella Security Services must wade through swarms of shuffling zombies, as well as tango with loose-cannon-like Bio-Organic Weapons.

## WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER GUYS?

The four playable members of Umbrella's Security Service are some of the baddest mothers you'll ever lay eyes on. But what about the opposing U.S. military task force? If Capcom expects folks to choose the good guys in multiplayer matches, I can only assume they're planning on introducing more than just a generic group of jarheads. Look forward to learning more about the USS's worst nightmares soon.

With SOCOM studio Slant Six Games onboard as codeveloper, it's no surprise that Operation Raccoon City boasts a robust competitive multiplayer element. Aside from revealing a four-on-four team attack challenge, Capcom's been pretty tight-lipped on specific modes and maps. That said, I did get some hands-on time with the four-on-four mode, which took place in a slummy section of Raccoon City. Playing as Beltway, the Umbrella Security Service's tank-like demolitions man, I enjoyed turning shambling zombies into soup with his explosives, while keeping the more tactical military forces pinned down with ranged weapons. Controls felt solid and, unsurprisingly, a bit like SOCOM's third-person mechanics.

In addition to blasting baddies to kingdom come—with the help of a Raccoon City gas station's extremely combustible fuel pumps—I

faced an angry Hunter. The scaly Bio-Organic Weapon, sporting razor-sharp claws and fangs to match, put up a good fight upon cornering me on a rooftop. Still, the fast-moving menace was no match for my shoot-and-strafe strategy; a few shotgun blasts to its reptilian face transformed it into a pulpy pile of goo. This intense encounter gave a hint as to how Capcom and Slant Six are attempting to mix up the standard multiplayer formula by introducing threats that occasionally distract you from critical objectives.

Another game-changing element centers on the undead hordes' craving for fresh blood. Outright killing opposing team members scores character-leveling points, but wounding them offers a bigger boon. On top of netting more points, you get to watch your enemy die slowly as flesh-hungry swarms feast on their ailing bodies. Blood never smelled so good!



Zombies' ability to absorb bullets like sponges make them the perfect meat-shield candidates.



ORC creates scary monkey-in-the-wrench moments by unleashing unpredictable Bio-Organic Weapons.



Resident Evil 4 hero Leon S. Kennedy may finally feel the wrath of a bad hair day in ORC.

Melee skills are as important as marksmanship against ORC's swarming threats. Better bring a blade...and maybe a chainsaw.



## CURTAINS FOR KENNEDY

Focusing on the events of early *Resident Evil* games, *Operation Raccoon City* promises to revisit key canon moments and fan-favorite characters. Even cooler, you'll be seeing these familiar faces and places from behind the gun barrels of the bad guys. While specifics are guarded like a vial of a rare T-Virus strain, Capcom's made no secret that "eliminating" *Resident Evil 4*'s pretty-boy protagonist Leon S. Kennedy is one of Umbrella Security Service's critical objectives. If true, fans of the goody two-shoes may well have to shut their eyes while squeezing the trigger.

*Resident Evil* canon could be forever altered if the USS manages to take out Kennedy. Among other things, who'll save Ashley in *RE4*?

PS3 XBOX360 PC

CAME DET'S



## RESIDENT EVIL: OPERATION RACCOON CITY

### INFO

Publisher: Capcom  
Developer: Capcom/  
Slant Six Games  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

4-player co-op/competitive

### GENRE

Third-person action

### RELEASE DATE

Winter 2011

### SUITABLE FOR

*Resident Evil* fans who secretly sympathize with the sinister Umbrella Corporation

## NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



*Left 4 Dead* and its sequel should satiate your appetite for slaughtering brain-eating foes alongside friends until *Operation Raccoon City* shuffles onto the scene.

### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Treading old *Resident Evil* turf as an Umbrella baddie
- ♥ Fast, third-person, zombie-popping co-op action
- ♥ Emptying clips into friends and zombies online

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Can it improve on the *Left 4 Dead* franchise's addictive formula?

# DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

The lead-footed, fire-screaming, San Francisco automotive treat • Words: Greg Orlando

**M**edical professionals are wary of recommending severe brain trauma as a means to obtain superhuman abilities. But in the case of accident-stricken and comatose San Francisco detective John Tanner, it's his ticket to recapturing criminal Charles Jericho.

The city by the bay provides an automotive playground for Tanner in *Driver: San Francisco*. As he does a very good impersonation of a zucchini in a hospital bed, he's dreaming he's out drifting and flying across the streets in more than 140 different licensed cars such as Dodge Neons and Chargers, Ford Crown Victorias, and DeLorean DMC-12s. Since this is his dream, he'll be able to jump from car to car at will, taking on individual missions that are alternately fanciful or plot-specific.

When Tanner transfers his consciousness into a car occupied by a driving instructor

and his young student, it's time for insane stunt driving. A heart rate meter tracks the instructor's mounting fear as you use San Francisco's many hills as high-speed ramps, perform crazy skids and drifts, and narrowly avoid oncoming traffic. Later, you'll take on a reality show challenge requiring more stunts in a confined area to ensure the TV guys get their footage, or take down fleeing criminals by smashing their cars to scrap metal, or participate in races to earn willpower, which serves as the game's currency, and allows you to buy your own presumably dope, and not whack, rides.

The game offers approximately 200 miles of road to explore and race across; "It's the biggest open-world driving area by some margin," the game's creative director Martin Edmondson notes. In addition, Edmondson also promises a smooth 60 frames-per-second ride and eight-player online action with both cooperative and competitive challenges when the game's rubber, as it were, hits the road to release this August. ☺

▼ San Francisco's normally cramped roads have been opened up a bit for more exciting racing and vehicular mayhem.

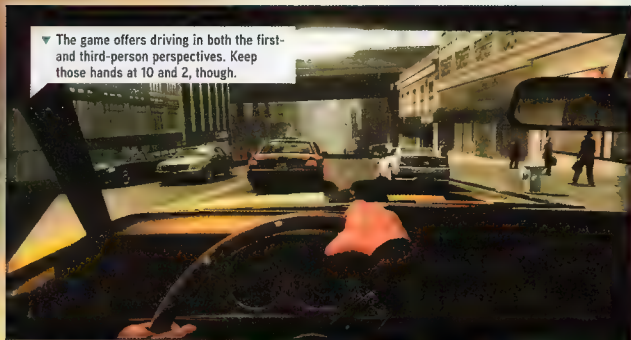


## I LEFT MY HEART (AND KEYS) IN SAN FRANCISCO

How realistic is the San Francisco in *San Francisco: Driver*? I saw landmarks such as wharves along the Embarcadero and Pac Bell baseball stadium, and got to drive down the twisty Lombard Street. But keep in mind this is a game, and games should be fun and not slavishly accurate, the game's creative director Martin Edmondson says, noting that the representation of the city and its surroundings is "more a feel and a flavor" than a spot-on recreation.

### SHIFT IT OR TICKET

▼ The game offers driving in both the first- and third-person perspectives. Keep those hands at 10 and 2, though.



"IT'S THE BIGGEST OPEN-WORLD DRIVING AREA BY SOME MARGIN"

—MARTIN EDMONDSON



### JUMPING SHIP

With Tanner's "shift" ability, he can leap from car to car and driver to driver. Sometimes he'll get to play as a cop, and other times as a no-goodnik member of the criminal element. This allows for a variety of mission types and, also, some humorous situations. How does Tanner handle being a lady driver with its obvious temptations? "I keep my hands on the wheel!" he says.





## DRIVER: SAN FRANCISCO

### INFO

Publisher: Ubisoft

Developer: Ubisoft Reflections

Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PC, 3DS, Macintosh

### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Cooperative and competitive; details TBA

### GENRE

Driving/Adventure

### RELEASE DATE

August 30, 2011

### SUITABLE FOR

Series fans, folks who appreciate absurd driving action

## GAME DETAILS



HANDS-ON

## WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Driver: San Francisco*.



### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ SF is a great city to explore
- ♥ I'm intrigued at the thought of playing a comatose man
- ♥ Indoor driving through parking lots and the like? Sign me up

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ Why do I need to buy cars when I can drive any car?
- ✖ The story seems kind of hokey. A criminal investigation conducted from the ICU?



▼ Detective John Tanner, shown with his partner in happier, non-comatose days, keeps an eye on San Francisco's mean streets.



## OUR STORY SO FAR



▲ Charles Jericho, the villain from *Driver 2*, faces execution at the beginning of *Driver: San Francisco*.



★ On his way to the execution, a missile-firing woman in a helicopter frees Charles Jericho from his captivity.

## COPS AND ROBBERS...

Charles Jericho, scumbag hitman, and John Tanner, racecar driver turned undercover detective, have a long history and heated rivalry stretching back to the original PlayStation's *Driver 2: The Wheelman Is Back*. The two had a supposedly final confrontation in the sequel, *Driver3*, in which either Tanner or Jericho died during an apocalyptic chase/gunfight in Istanbul, Turkey. Both, of course, miraculously survived for the sequel and their enmity continues in *Driver: San Francisco*.



## STAY IN THE VEHICLE...

*Driver: San Francisco* lets you visit John Tanner's hospital bed for updates on the story's progress. You'll see non-interactive cut-scenes featuring Tanner on foot, but the entirety of the game's missions will take place inside cars. Previous games in the *Driver* series included on-foot missions, but they will not be included in this iteration.

▼ Rocksmith's visuals show the fretboard from the "back."

# ROCKSMITH

Music-game overload? Well, Ubisoft still wants to rock with you! • Words: Andy Eddy

**D**espite critics declaring that the "music game" genre is dead—Activision pulled the plug, at least temporarily on the *Guitar Hero* franchise, and Rock Band's sales have declined since its introduction—Ubisoft is prepping a new entry it hopes will prove them dead wrong.

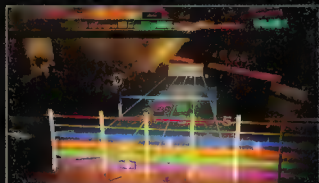
Rocksmith, which Ubisoft is billing as "the most authentic guitar experience in music gaming," is designed to turn playing a guitar into a teaching game. It also purports to bridge all experience levels, from the brand-new player to veteran strummers, through the use of "dynamic difficulty"—the game will assess your skill as you play and make the material more or less challenging based on how well you're keeping up. And there'll be plenty to keep you active, from challenges (on such skills as note bending and chords) to an event-driven

"Journey" campaign to diverse "Guitarcade" minigames. The game will ship with over 50 licensed songs out of the box and, of course, offer more for download after release.

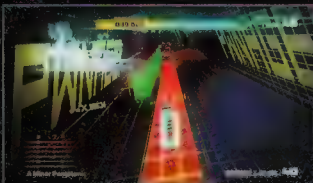
Rocksmith's coolest feature is that it'll enable any standard guitar to be plugged in and used as a controller, thanks to an adapter that'll connect the axe to your console or computer. And don't worry if your guitar knowledge is nil—Rocksmith will lead you through whatever you'll need—even including videos on such topics as stringing a guitar. And it'll run you through a tuning exercise regularly, so that you're on pitch.

Hmmm—I just heard knocking in my closet, but all that's there is my old Stratocaster...

## ANY GUITAR CAN BE A CONTROLLER



▲ The gameplay will take you from hitting single notes to playing full chords as you get better at it.



▲ Minigames will push your ability to play scales and chords—and then compare your friends' scores to yours.

PS3 XBOX360 PC

GAME DETAILS



### ROCKSMITH

#### INFO

Publisher: Ubisoft  
Developer: Ubisoft  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

#### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

To be announced

#### GENRE

Music

#### RELEASE DATE

October 11, 2011 (Q4 2011 for PC)

#### SUITE FOR

Guitarists, closet players, and wannabe shredders

### WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Rocksmith*.



#### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ The game will push you to improve, which should result in you learning more
- ♥ Using an actual guitar teaches you actual guitar playing



#### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ There's a lot involved in playing a guitar, but is *Rocksmith* comprehensive enough that you'll play well, not just by rote?

▼ "Worst. Vacation.  
Ever."

# DEAD ISLAND

"Next time, we're going to Disneyland."  
• Words: Evan Shamoan

SPF 9000  
Bring sunblock:  
That tropical sun  
will do a number  
on your skin.



**I**n the early days, before the preproduction even started, an idea was floating around the Techland office," says producer Adrian Ciszewski. "We wanted to create a 'serious' zombie game with a plausible story and more personal, immersive combat. The 'Island' bit was initially there to provide a sense of isolation." Such was the conception of Dead Island, and the team quickly realized the storytelling potential in setting the game on a beautiful island full of tourists. "The idea of hell in paradise was born, and we made it one of the key foundations of the game."

None of this is to say that Dead Island won't be the same sort of potent survival/action cocktail that has made the zombie genre so popular. "Dead Island isn't a life simulation, not even an unlife simulation at that!" says Ciszewski. "It's an intense action game happening in an open environment, and the enemy AI is not scripted in any way and can roam the environment." Enemy locations, types, and numbers are subject to randomization, all of which creates an environment where no two battles are exactly alike. "Of course zombies can't be rocket scientists (and creating an 'intelligently dumb,' convincing AI is difficult), but they still manage to surprise and threaten my character in the game, despite my intimate familiarity with [it]." Most of the weapons found on the island

will be of the melee variety, and there will be many, ranging from blunt baseball bats to razor-sharp machetes. "We spent hours upon hours of tweaking, testing and prototyping to make sure that the FPS melee fighting is responsive, exciting, immersive, and fun," says Ciszewski. "We made sure that the combat would remain engaging throughout the entire campaign and beyond."

Weapon modifications also become key to success. The player discovers and gains access to "workbenches" throughout the game, which allow for the construction of customized, more powerful weapons (think: MacGyver). For example, with some wires, a belt, and a battery, you can transform a knife into an "electric knife." "I really like the weapon modifications, using electricity to add useful and lethal effects to seemingly ordinary weapons," says Ciszewski. "Still, my personal favorite is the sticky bomb: a knife with a homemade time explosive device attached. It's perfect for close combat, especially for characters focused on edged weapons." When things get too hot, the contraption can be thrown at a group of enemies, and it will take them all out after a short delay. "It's easy to build (it's a crafted weapon) and offers great value for money," jokes Ciszewski. Guns will be available, but melee is the primary form of combat, as ammunition will be scarce. **B**

#### THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

In order to bring the "Island of Banoi" alive, the Techland team went for atmospheric cover overtures. "Open-world games are much more difficult for sound designers and composers as they can't easily be directed," says Ciszewski. "In those games the ambient sounds and music must react in a dynamic and rather unobtrusive way, to the choices players make every minute." He says that listening to the frantic, limb-slicing sounds of melee fighting will be a pretty hair-raising experience in and of itself. "It was never about making those sounds gross or over the top. They're simply convincing and powerful. You can't help but think, 'this is now hitting a zombie with this sledgehammer would probably sound like...'"





PS3 XBOX360 PC



## DEAD ISLAND

## INFO

Publisher: Deep Silver

Developer: Techland

Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

## MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

4-player co-op

## GENRE

Action-adventure

## RELEASE DATE

September 6, 2011

## SUITABLE FOR

Survivalists, vacationers, zombie enthusiasts

GAME DETAILS



HANDS-ON



## FRONTMAN

The Ram zombie can pound measly humans into the ground for serious damage. He's also invulnerable from the front; you'll need to dodge his attack and get behind him before countering.

## FRIENDS FOREVER

Dead Island is a first for Techland in many ways. This is the studio's first open-world game, for one, as well as its first major co-op undertaking, which requires an entire networking protocol to be built. "On top of that, we're aiming for [a] quality and level of detail usually found in linear experiences," says Ciszewski. "Looking back at the amount of work involved and seeing the results, I think we have something to be proud of."

## NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



Craving multiplayer zombie mayhem? Left 4 Dead

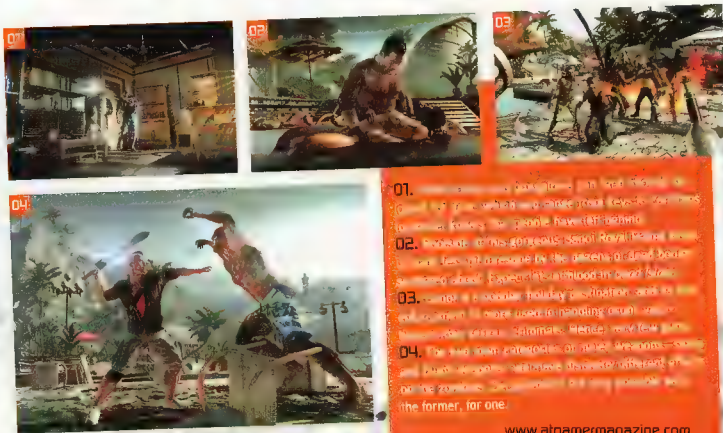
and its sequel will have you destroying the undead for weeks, as will either of the goofy, glorious Dead Rising games.

## WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Sweet premise and exotic location for a zombie thriller
- ♥ 4-player co-op is always welcome

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

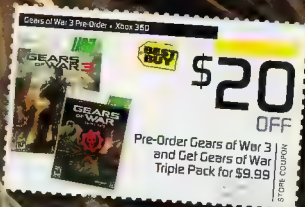
- ✕ Another zombie game?
- ✕ Won't be easy living up to that spectacular trailer...



01. The game's premise is simple: you're stuck on a tropical island with a bunch of zombies. The people have left behind.
02. The game is the first in the series, and it's a good thing. It's a good thing because it's a good thing.
03. The game is a good thing because it's a good thing.
04. The game is a good thing because it's a good thing.

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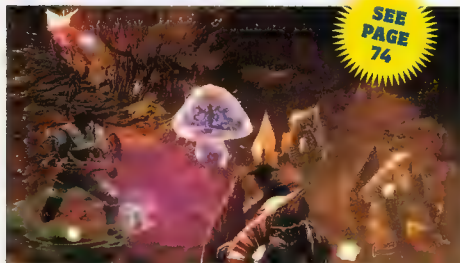
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## 01 DUNGEON SIEGE III



Boasting four classes, Guardian, Archon, Lescanzi, and Scholar, *Dungeon Siege III* picks up the mantle of this storied RPG series. Once again in peril, it'll be up to you to protect the people and nation of Ehb. With a host of special moves, weapons, and magic at your disposal, you'll be called upon to fight any manner of dangerous creatures. In addition to a robust single-player campaign, *Dungeon Siege III* also boasts cooperative multiplayer whether online or splitscreen.



## 02 TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED 2



Who says Ibiza is all about house music and glitter? In this, the second installment of the *Test Drive Unlimited* series, you travel to the Mediterranean party island not to dance the night away, but rather, to get a taste of some of the world's most powerful cars. *Test Drive Unlimited 2* blends single- and multiplayer modes as you take on hundreds of missions and challenges. Of course, this being Ibiza, you'll be able to party as you spend time in player-run clubs interacting with other drivers.



## 03 RESISTANCE GREATEST HITS DUAL PACK



Just in time for the September release of *Resistance 3* get all caught up with the *Resistance Greatest Hits Dual Pack*. A sci-fi FPS created by Insomniac Games, in *Resistance: Fall of Man* and its sequel *Resistance 2*, you'll take on the role of Nathan Hale as he attempts to save the world from the Chimerean menace. Part of an elite force of soldiers called "The Sentinels," Nathan Hale is forced not only to battle the Chimerean invaders, but also the Chimera virus inside him.



## 04 SIMS 3: GENERATIONS



If the rigors of real life aren't enough for you, pick up *Sims 3: Generations* and live it up with this awesome expansion pack. In *Sims 3: Generations* you'll have even more freedom to impact the lives of your sims. There's a little something for everyone in this latest edition of the *Sims* as you can do everything from playing with chemistry sets and making home movies to cheating on your spouse while in the midst of a midlife crisis.



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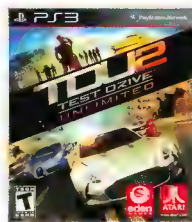
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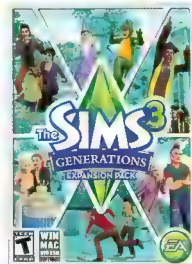
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## 05 PRE-ORDER GEARS OF WAR 3

The final game in the Gears of War saga, *Gears of War 3* aims to be one of the biggest games of 2011. But before you jump into the fray why not bone up on all things Gears of War? Now, when you pre-order Gears of War 3, you can buy the Gears of War Triple Pack for \$9.99. The Gears of War Triple Pack includes Gears of War and Gears of War 2. Additionally, it comes with a token that allows you to download the Gears of War 2 All Fronts Pack from Xbox Live.



## 07 ANY STRATEGY GUIDE

Nobody likes to get beaten over and over again. Whether you're facing a particularly difficult single-player campaign or you just can't figure out how not to get pwned in your favorite online multiplayer games, maybe you need a strategy guide. Now's a good time to get reading, because the coupon in this issue will let you save \$5 on any strategy guide that's \$9.99 or more.



## 06 XBOX LIVE STARTER KIT

Now that you have that shiny new Xbox, you're gonna want to pick up the Xbox Live Starter Kit. This kit rocks a 12-month Xbox Live Gold membership giving you access to services like Facebook, Twitter, Netflix, and ESPN as well as letting you compete online against friends. The Starter Kit also comes with the Chatpad, making it even easier to taunt—or rather, communicate with—your friends and foes. If that's not enough, the Starter Kit also includes 400 Xbox Live Points.



## 08 TURTLE BEACH DX11 GAMING HEADSET

There's nothing worse than getting stabbed in the back in a game of *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, only to have the kid who committed the act say to you, "Get Turtle Beach, dude!" With Turtlebeach's DX11 Gaming Headset you'll more clearly hear the footsteps of your opponents as they try to sneak up behind you. Sporting awesome surround sound technology, these cans will help immerse you in the games you love more than ever.



# CATHERINE

Law versus chaos: Which way will you go? Words: William D'Neel

It's not every day that you see a game that elicits the kind of across-the-board response of *Catherine*. It started when I received the screenshots from the folks at Atlus and my art director asked me, "What is this game supposed to be about? I have no idea how to design this story." Since I attended the demo, and was really impressed with what I saw, it was my responsibility to explain exactly what *Catherine* was.

Simply put, I told them, *Catherine* is about a guy named Vincent, who is a 30-something computer programmer who cheats on his girlfriend Katherine with another woman, named

tormented by eight nightmares, all of which are inspired by waking fears of his. In his sleep, Vincent is called upon to complete a series of tower trials. The trials will definitely appeal to platform gamers who like puzzles. The catch for Vincent, though, is that if he fails the tower trials, and plummets to his death in his dreams, then he's doomed in real life, too.

*Catherine* also has many adventure game elements. When not in his dreams, Vincent spends time at his favorite watering hole getting drunk with his buddies. It is here where the game's animation style really shines. The

## 4 DEGREES CELSIUS DOES A GREAT JOB OF CREATING A VISUALLY COMPELLING ENVIRONMENT

*Catherine*. *Catherine* (the game) is described by its developers as "a game dedicated to the bold exploration of the pleasures and horrors of love, commitment, and everything in between." Vincent is tormented by his infidelities, as well, he should be. His girlfriend, Katherine with a "K," is a perfectly fine girlfriend. But this in no way assuages the sense of malaise that has taken over Vincent's heart. Or, for that matter, the guilt that he feels for cheating on her. And this is where the gameplay kicks in.

The essential gameplay takes place over the course of eight nights wherein Vincent is

game's animation studio, 4 Degrees Celsius, does a great job of creating a visually compelling environment within which to drink.

While the tower puzzles are the meat of the game, you'll also be required to help navigate Vincent through a series of moral decisions that will impact the game. Should he continue to deceive his girlfriend? Should he come clean? Depending on how Vincent answers these questions determines whether or not his world is lawful or chaotic. Also, his choices determine which of seven different endings you'll see, and not all of them will be pleasant. ☺



▲ You can advance the storyline by interacting with Vincent's cell phone.



▲ Pretty ladies play a huge role in *Catherine*, as Vincent will be tempted every step of the way.

## WHO (OR WHAT) IS CATHERINE?

As the game goes on the question "Who (or what) is Catherine?" will become more and more important. Of course, since the game relies heavily on its storyline, I'm not gonna spoil it for you, just be sure to pay close attention to details, both when awake and dreaming.

▼ Catherine, or Katherine? Either way, Vincent has his hands full.



#### WHAT'S WITH ALL THE SHEEP? \\\



Vincent isn't alone in his philandering. The sheep that appear in Vincent's dreams represent other unfaithful men who, like Vincent, are required to solve puzzles in their dreams in order to survive.



Braaaaahhh!  
Pay attention to the sheep. You'll recognize them from the bar.



PS3 XBOX360

#### GAME DETAILS



#### CATHERINE

##### INFO

Publisher: Atlus  
Developer: Atlus  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

##### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Two player co-op and competitive modes

##### GENRE

Action/Adventure/Puzzle

##### RELEASE DATE

July 26, 2011

##### SUITABLE FOR

Adventure fans who want a little puzzle with their spice.

#### NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



If you enjoy adventure games then

be sure to check out 2010's *Heavy Rain*. It's a little more serious than *Catherine* but it's a beautiful game.

#### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Interesting storyline
- ♥ The visuals are awesome

#### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Puzzle-style gameplay may not appeal to everyone
- ✗ Not sure if I like the moral lesson here

# ASURA'S WRATH

God of more Words: Matt Cabral

If you find God of War's battles a bit tame and its protagonist too polite, you may want to put Asura's Wrath on your radar. Inspired by a bizarre blend of Japanese mythology and science fiction, this third-person action fest stars a mad-as-hell hero who engages in excessively epic boss battles. By comparison, Sony's "scary" Ghost of Sparta looks like a scuffle-starting schoolyard bully.

As the story goes, Asura's been betrayed, and his daughter's been abducted, and seeking vengeance means defeating seven larger-than-life demigods. We got a taste of

one of these melees, which saw the teed-off protagonist face a towering, Buddha-like baddie. The comparatively pint-sized Asura charges the enemy, firing bursts of energy from his palms with each angry stride. The boss reacts by tossing rockets, which the god-slayer swiftly pulls from the air and hurls back at the big bad. Climbing floating chunks of rock previously ejected from the ground by the enemy's earth-rattling fist, Asura then ascends toward his foe's face to score an up-close finisher.

Just as the blockbuster battle seems to be approaching its level-capping conclusion, a rotund rival slams Asura into the ground. The Buddha then balloons up to 10 times

its original girth and pokes a single finger—which is approximately the size of Texas—toward a nearly defeated Asura. In response, the determined hero unleashes a special charge attack which gives him four additional arms with which to lay down the pain. While the crushing finger snaps most of Asura's six limbs like peanut brittle, he delivers one last-ditch blow that creates a lethal reverberation up through his massive enemy's body.

Developer CyberConnect2 is promising much more way-over-the-top action, unbridled anger, and screen-filling boss battles when Asura's Wrath arrives next year. I'll be looking forward to all of the above...as soon as I catch my breath. 



▼ Wow, those Crest White Strips really do the trick!

▼ Even when sporting only two arms, Asura makes for a formidable fighter.



## SLAY WITH STYLE



▲ Expect Asura's anger-fueled romp to yield plenty of gory maulings and graphic finishing moves.



▲ Gameplay alternates between more straightforward third-person brawling and epic boss battles.

## ANGER MANAGEMENT

My demo focused on one of the game's show-stopping boss battles, which incorporated a mix of third-person action, on-rails sequences, and quick-time events. But don't mistake Asura's Wrath for a showcase of the Coliseum—a grander model of increasingly difficult boss encounters, as it will also include more traditionally paced levels. When not shaking your six fists at a sun-eclipsing giant, expect to take on swarms of comparatively smaller enemies with the varied powers of your perturbed protagonist.

### ▼ FISTS OF FURY

We're pretty sure Asura's just punching this dude because he's so damn ugly.



PS3 XBOX 360

## CAME DETAILS



### ASURA'S WRATH

#### INFO

Publisher: Capcom  
Developer: CyberConnect2  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

#### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

#### GENRE

Action

#### RELEASE DATE

TBA 2012

#### SUITABLE FOR

Action fans who can't be bothered fighting bosses that are less than 10 stories tall

## WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Asura's Wrath*.



### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ So-crazy-it's-cool action
- ♥ Stylized visuals mix science fiction and Japanese mythology
- ♥ Asura's spiky hair and white-out eyes scream "I'm mad as hell!"

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Will the jaw-dropping battles play as good as they look?

# THE LAST GUARDIAN

Take a walk on the child side • Words: Evan Shamoon

If you've played either of Team Ico's previous titles, *Ico* or *Shadow of the Colossus*, you probably won't require much convincing to play *The Last Guardian*. It's only the third game from the ace Japanese developer, and easily its most ambitious to date.

In broad strokes, the game tells the story of a young boy as he attempts to escape a dilapidated castle; along the way, he befriends a 30-foot mythical beast named Trico, and the relationship between the two becomes the core of the story. (In case you're wondering,

Trico is a combination of the Japanese words for bird, "tori," and cat, "neko.") Trico is driven by animal instincts, and according to developer Fumita Ueda it's up to you to guide the creature through the world, "taking advantage of his natural behavior" in order to complete puzzles. The boy can climb upon and ride Trico, teach it to "stay," and use it in a variety of other ways to progress.

Ueda has said that a central theme of *The Last Guardian* is developing "emotional attachment" between the protagonist and Trico. Trico

is initially afraid of and hostile towards the boy; we see arrows stuck in its back, apparently from a previous encounter with human beings—but over time the animal bonds with the boy.

Like Team Ico's earlier titles, *The Last Guardian* is a third-person experience that combines elements of action-adventure and puzzle gameplay. The boy protagonist begins unarmed; he can, however, run, jump, climb, and perform other actions familiar from the studio's earlier works. While much remains unclear about the game, it seems certain that it will fall into the same vein.

What's been shown thus far is nothing short of stunning; the worst thing about *The Last Guardian* will be waiting for its 2012 release. ©

## WHAT'S BEEN SHOWN THUS FAR IS NOTHING SHORT OF STUNNING

▲ *The Last Guardian's* soundscape will often remain sparse, less interested in swells of music than wind gusting overhead or water swirling underfoot.



▼ Climbing will be an important part of the *Last Guardian* experience.

Hope you're not afraid of heights. You'd better have some grip strength, too.

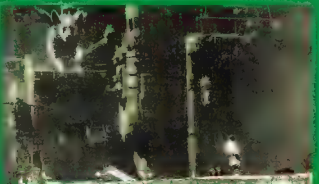
**ADDED DIMENSION** \\\ The *Last Guardian*'s world is much more vivid than its predecessors, with high-contrast splashes of color and sunlight throughout. It's not all butterflies and sunlight, certainly, but it is significantly less monochromatic than either of Team Ico's previous creations. With HD remakes of *Ico* and *Shadow of the Colossus* coming to PlayStation 3 this year with full 3D integration, I'd expect the same from *The Last Guardian*. Whether the game integrates any sort of Move controls remains to be seen.



#### TAMING THE BEAST \\\



▲ Trico is a wild beast and not a domesticated animal. He will not listen to you unless you have a good reason.



▲ Trico has spears and arrows stuck in his back when he kills them, and he bounces back.



▲ How do you raise an animal? A. Very gently.

#### A MIND OF ITS OWN \\\

Developer Fumito Ueda has explained that, unlike the relatively obedient Yorda in *Ico* and Agro (the horse) in *Shadow of the Colossus*, Trico has a mind of its own. The boy must first learn how to convince the beast to follow him, and stay when necessary. Over time, the animal—*not* unlike a dog—will learn new tricks.

PS3

GAME DETAILS



#### THE LAST GUARDIAN

##### INFO

Publisher: SCEA  
Developer: Team Ico  
Platforms: PS3

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE  
N/A

##### GENRE

Action-adventure

RELEASE DATE  
2012

##### SUITABLE FOR

Ico fans, art enthusiasts,  
fans of cute cat blogs

#### WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *The Last Guardian*.



##### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ The biggest production yet from one of the industry's finest developers
- ♥ Gorgeous graphics and compelling characters



##### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Gameplay details have been scarce
- ✗ Delayed until 2012

# UNCHARTED 3

## DRAKE'S DECEPTION

How do you follow up the über-dramatic *Uncharted 2*? Torment your poor heroes • Words: Evan Narcisse

**W**ith Kratos on hiatus and planet Helghan blown to bits in *Killzone 3*, you could say that Nathan Drake's the reigning superstar of the PlayStation 3. *Uncharted 2* took the swashbuckling action-adventure series to new heights, and the third installment in Naughty Dog's franchise looks to shed light on the mysterious pasts of the snarky treasure hunter and his lovably gruff mentor Sully. Justin Richmond, game director of *Uncharted 3*, answered some burning questions about what to expect in *Drake's Deception*.

The first *Uncharted* introduced us to Drake and teased us with an element of the fantastic, and the second was built confidently on that foundation with its highly polished, dramatic storytelling. In light of the progression seen in

the previous games, how are the developers approaching *Uncharted 3*? "At Naughty Dog we are always trying to come up with ways to make our games more grounded and cinematic, while also trying to blend narrative and gameplay together in dynamic and interesting ways," says Richmond. "On the narrative side we always want to push our characters further and go deeper into what makes them tick."

It's no surprise that hard-hitting storytelling is high on the team's list. "From the beginning of development on *Uncharted 3*, one of the major touchstones was the idea of a 'bromance' between Drake and Sully," says Richmond. "One of the best ways to see what a character is made of is to push them to their limits, and we are certainly doing that with

our characters in *Uncharted 3*. By the end of the game, we want the player to have an even deeper understanding of our characters and their individual personalities."

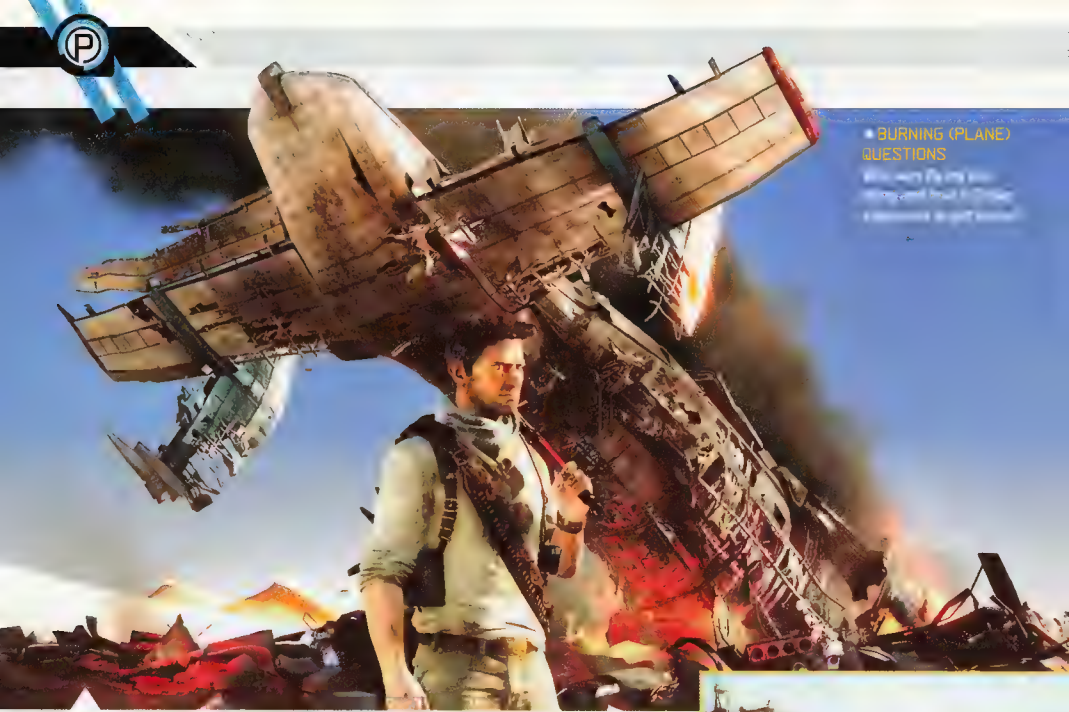
And surely this flagship title will have new tech? "On the gameplay side, we've made a ton of updates to *Uncharted 3*, especially on the animation side of things that help ground Drake in the environment like never before. Characters move differently depending on the situation, they can touch the environment as they move through it. In the end, Drake feels even more connected to his surroundings in this game, and I think players will enjoy seeing all of the new flourishes we have added in."

I've certainly enjoyed what I've seen so far and look forward to capping off this trilo-





THE FAN-FAVORITE  
HERO FINDS HIMSELF  
HIGH AND DRY IN  
THIS YEAR'S SEQUEL

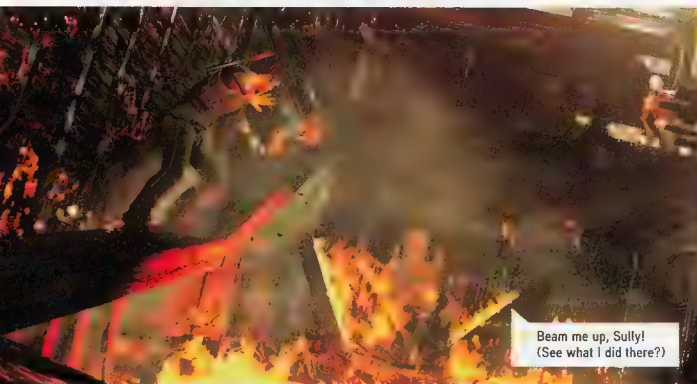
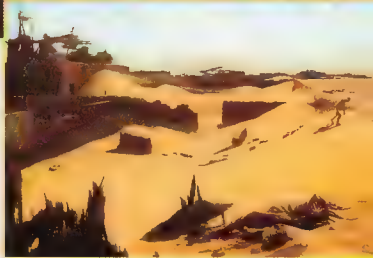


# BURNING (PLANE) QUESTIONS

How and why did the plane crash? What's the story behind the wreckage?

## ANY LEADS TO CRASHING PLANE FROM A LONG WAY

Drake's got a habit of making complicated travel plans, and *Uncharted 3* sees him winding up in the Arabian Desert, courtesy of a plane that's seen better days. The arid wasteland supposedly hides the secrets of a time-lost ancient city called the "Atlantis of the Sands," and the drama that unfolds there will have our half-tucked hero coming to grips with traumas that he thought were buried long ago. Hope you like sand. If you don't already you probably will, given how beautifully rendered it is.



Beam me up, Sully!  
(See what I did there?)

*Drake's Deception* will include some new moves that show off Drake's agility. "We're building on our foreground object traversal system from *Uncharted 2*, which lets Drake, his allies, and all the opponents use all their moves on any moving object in the world," says Richmond. "We've enabled it with dynamic physics objects for *Uncharted 3* and the traversable physics objects open up a lot of game design opportunities for us." Want more? "We're also adding a 'backward climb' ability where Drake can hop out around vertical overhanging obstacles, as well as the ability to vertically jump off of a balance beam. These give our designers even more opportunities to have Drake move through complex spaces in interesting ways."

## UNCHARTED UPGRADES



### FIRE AT WILL

The Chateau uses the new fire tech to great effect, showing off particles and collapsing environments.

### HUG IT OUT

New AI lets enemies team up and hold Drake in place while others take shots at him. Barroom brawl!

### THUGS ARE US

Marlowe has an army of thugs ready to wrinkle Nathan and Sully's best suits. Jerks.

### NICE STROLL

Marlowe's quiet menace is a neat contrast to the more traditional villains of the previous games.



### RAIN OR FURN

Next time bring umbrellas, guys.

## DRAKE AND SULLY HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS

The globetrotting buddies face off against a new kind of villain in *Uncharted 3*. As a member of the secret society called the Cabal, Katherine Marlowe wields more money, power, and influence than anyone Drake and Sully have ever angered. The roots of Marlowe's dastardly group stretch back more than four centuries, and she contends that the ring that Nathan traces back to his ancestor Sir Francis Drake actually belongs to her.



PS3

GAME DETAILS



## UNCHARTED 3: DRAKE'S DECEPTION

### INFO

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment  
Developer: Naughty Dog  
Platforms: PS3

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE  
TBA

### GENRE

Action-adventure

### RELEASE DATE

November 1, 2011

### SUITABLE FOR

Fans of Drake & Sully slashfic, your weird uncle who always takes the metal detector to the beach, secret society members

## WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*



### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Improved animation
- ♥ All-new melee combat moves and stealth attacks
- ♥ Learning more about Drake and Sully's bromantic relationship

- ✗ No signs of Elena or the foxy Chloe from *Uncharted 2*
- ✗ Big bad villain probably subscribes to AARP *The Magazine*

# SILENT HILL: DOWNPOUR

Forecast: cloudy with a chance of night terrors Words: Matt Calabrese



A staple of the survival horror genre for over a decade, the Silent Hill franchise has struggled to define its identity in recent years. Different development studios, focusing on varying ideas and designs, have delivered a number of solid sequels and spin-offs, but none have quite recaptured the spine-tingling magic of series highpoint *Silent Hill 2*.

Up-and-coming developer Vatra Games hopes to return the franchise to its former nerve-traying glory with *Silent Hill: Downpour*. By going back to the series' roots, while also injecting some fresh ideas into the formula, Vatra hopes to frighten you into playing with the lights on. For starters, *Downpour* forgoes *Silent Hill*: Homecoming's action-driven gameplay in favor of a fight-or-flight approach. Your most effective weapon against the terrifying town's nightmarish creatures will often be your fast feet. Traditional melee and ranged weapons will be available, but plan on spending more time running the streets than peering down your sights.

*Downpour*'s also focusing heavily on psychological scares, so expect to face a goose bump-summoning lineup of macabre menaces that may or may not be figments of protagonist Murphy Pendleton's twisted mind. A convict whose prison transport crashes near the seemingly charming burg, Pendleton possesses a damaged psyche that's of little help when it comes to subduing the town's disturbing denizens. His dark past—one that landed him in the slammer in the first place—and mysterious backstory play an integral role in shaping *Downpour*'s grim narrative.

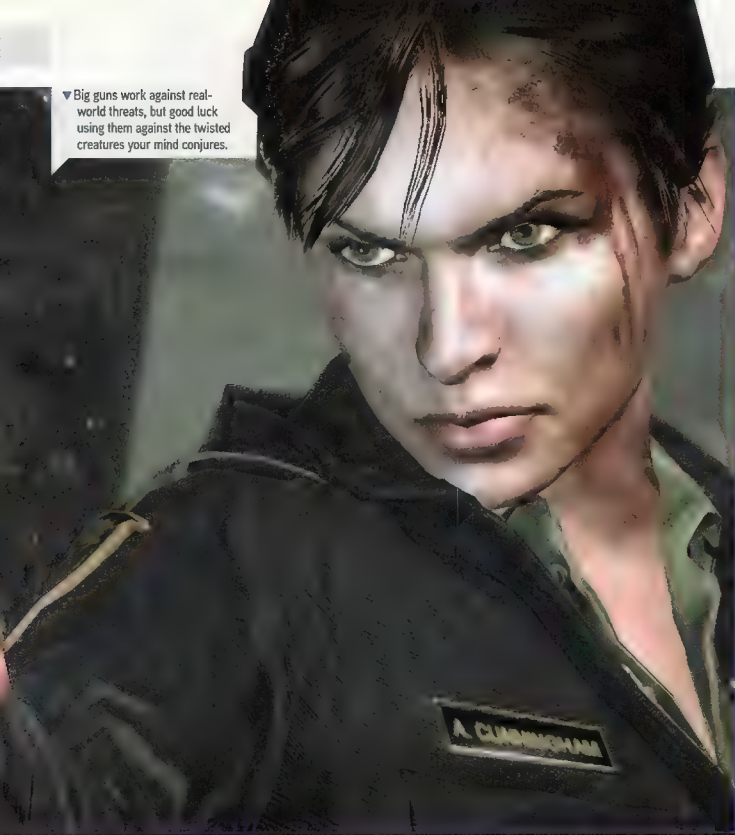
Horror fans' next trip to *Silent Hill* looks like a welcome return to form. An intoxicating mix of monster-in-closet moments, tense pacing, emotionally driven scares, and an engrossing story starring a protagonist who's forced to run more than gun, I don't doubt that *Downpour* will have me whimpering like a baby when it creeps onto consoles this fall. ☹

## BONE-CHILLING 'BURBS //



Before actually arriving in the titular town, you'll get to explore some equally creepy environments. From a deserted diner and abandoned gas station to a lodge that makes the Bates Motel look like a five-star resort, you can expect to lose your calm in a variety of disturbing locations before landing in *Silent Hill* proper.

▼ Big guns work against real-world threats, but good luck using them against the twisted creatures your mind conjures.



## IT'S RAINING DEATH

The latest *Silent Hill*'s soggy subtitle factors prominently into the game's narrative. As the story goes, Murphy Pendleton's past is littered with bad memories of the wet stuff. Perhaps he landed in prison because he drowned someone, or maybe he just had a bad experience drinking from the tap while vacationing somewhere tropical. Regardless of why he's menaced by moisture, you can bet *Downpour*'s scariest moments will be complemented by flooded basements, bursting pipes, leaky ceilings, and geyser-shooting toilets.



You can find weapons scattered around *Downpour*'s gloomy environments, but these breakable items can't be relied on during the game's more intense encounters.



Pendleton finds himself freed from the penitentiary, but imprisoned by his own disturbed psyche. Welcome to *Silent Hill*, sucker!

PS3 XBOX 360

## CAME DETAILS



### SILENT HILL: DOWNPOUR

#### INFO

Publisher: Konami  
Developer: Vatra Games  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360

#### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player/TBA

#### GENRE

Survival Horror

#### RELEASE DATE

Fall 2011

#### SUITABLE FOR

Horror fans who prefer fleeing from mind-breakingly horrific foes rather than filling them full of lead

## NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



While only available for the Wii, PS2, and PSP, last year's *Silent Hill: Shattered Memories* should do a solid job in preparing you for the psychological scares to come in *Downpour*.

### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ A return to form for the horror series
- ♥ Chilling story promises to engress the mind and fray the nerves
- ♥ Atmospheric uses of water, lights, and shadows up the immersion

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Has the popular horror series *Dead Space* stolen *Silent Hill*'s fans?



# THE DARKNESS II

Hopefully this sequel will have all the heart of its predecessor • Words: Mitch Dyer

**L**ife sucks for Jackie Estacado. He lost the love of his life, he's literally been to Hell and back, and everyone's always out to kill him. The first *Darkness* opens with an attempt on Jackie's life, and would-be assassinations are a large reason our boy is so ticked in *The Darkness II*. Now that he's running the mob, he's a high-profile target. It's all good, though: *The Darkness* has his back.

The sentient tendrils jutting from Jackie's back deal disgusting, dismembering damage to anyone unfortunate enough to survive a burst of submachine-gun fire to the ribs. They bite, they slice, they throw pointy things. With one toothy snake tied to each shoulder button on the controller, and with each trigger acting as an enabler of firearm-flavored violence, Estacado's arsenal is nothing if not plentiful.

This encourages a deeper level of murderous flexibility than the first *Darkness* allowed. *The Darkness II* has the potential for plenty of creative enemy encounters (with equally imaginative slaughtering solutions), but this isn't at all what I want to see as its main focus.

Developer Starbreeze threaded killer combat scenarios, grim settings, and shocking story events in *The Darkness* to create a killer game that unrolled like an ace mob drama. It'll be interesting to see how another developer (Digital Extremes, the guys and gals behind the abysmal *Dark Sector*) tackles the sequel.

It wasn't the guts and gore that made *The Darkness* such an incredible experience—it complemented the powerful sense of loss and Estacado's relatable psychological issues.

From what publisher 2K's shown me so far, *The Darkness II* emphasizes action over emotion—hopefully this is merely a matter of 2K wanting to keep a lid on the story. Combat in *The Darkness* was certainly good, but moments where Jackie spends time with his girlfriend or his grandmother sold him as human. Hopefully *The Darkness II* remembers where it came from, and gives Jackie's awful life a bit of light. ☺

**ESTACADO'S ARSENAL IS NOTHING IF NOT PLENTIFUL**



◀ One darkling? Yep, Jackie commands one minion rather than groups in *Darkness II*.



## BIG MOUTH

I'm tired of hearing Nolan North, the dude who rocks as Nathan Drake and irritates as seemingly every other videogame character ever. He's taking over the role of Estacado for *The Darkness II*, and his phony east-coast accent is laughable. Hopefully what little I've heard of his performance isn't indicative of the rest of his role. Oh well. Mike Patton's back as *The Darkness*, which rules.

## SHOTGUN. MEET FACE



## PARABLE

*The Darkness* had tons of religious imagery, which the sequel seems to keep up with. Estacado's explored Hell, he's met some of the Four Horsemen, and, with *The Darkness II*, he's been crucified. It's heavy stuff thematically, and because it's such a gritty franchise in the first place, it's all even more unsettling than it would normally be. What else can we look forward to here?



## CONFESSIO

For the this year's annual Free Comic Book Day—keep your eyes on the local shops next May!—Top Cow published a prequel to *The Darkness II* titled *Confession*. This one-shot bridges the gap between the games, and introduces us to the games' version of Jackie. He's considerably different than the comics character, so this book is a solid place to start (or catch up).

PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS



## THE DARKNESS II

### INFO

Publisher: 2K  
Developer: Digital Extremes  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE  
TBD

### GENRE

First-person shooter

### RELEASE DATE

October 4, 2011

### SUITABLE FOR

Fans of overkill, ultra-violence, and overlooked classics



## NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



The Darkness is an overlooked, underappreciated shooter. It's emotional, dark, and sickeningly fun. You can find the first game for as low as \$5 in some places.



### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ More Jackie Estacado
- ♥ More violence
- ♥ More Darkness control



### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ The inescapable Nolan North taints Jackie's voice
- ✗ Developer Digital Extremes' spotty track record
- ✗ Will the balls-out action undo what made *The Darkness* great?

# PREY 2 GOES IN NEW DIRECTIONS

**Dressed to Kill?**  
Alien bounty hunters look only slightly less gaudy than that Dog Guy on TV.

# PREY 2

Human Head's follow-up to its sci-fi shooter ditches a lot of its predecessor's gimmicks and takes the world of the game in new directions.

Words: Evan Narcisse

When Bethesda announced *Prey 2* it came as a surprise. The 2007 original spent nearly a decade in development and, when it came out, features that once seemed innovative were either old news or better done elsewhere. (Portal, anyone?) But *Prey 2* goes in new directions. Gone is protagonist Tommy and the Native American motif—now you're Killian Samuels, a police officer abducted by the aliens. Samuels winds up on a planet called Exodus, where he becomes a bounty hunter. Alas, a memory loss obscures what exactly he's been doing up till now on Exodus.

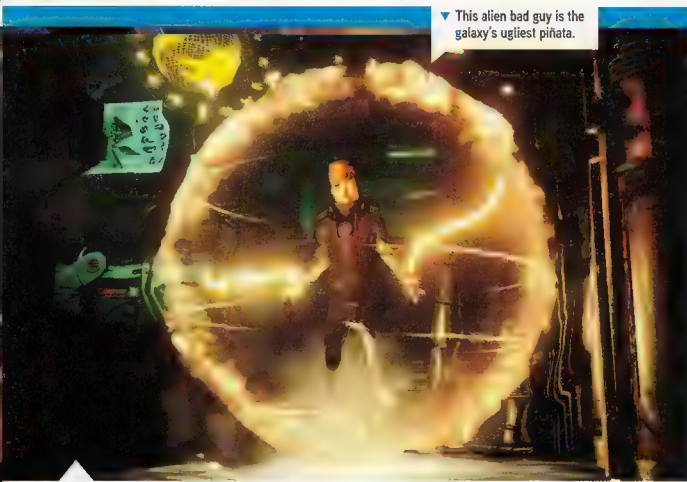
With all the abducting going on, you might be wondering if Samuels will be the only human on the far-off planet. Is he trying to get back to Earth, or ascend to power on Exodus?

"We aren't revealing too much of the story at this point," teases project lead Chris Rhinehart. "A big part of *Prey 2*'s narrative is the mystery of the secrets of Exodus and what Killian is trying to accomplish there. At first, Killian appears to be the only human, until he encounters Tommy from *Prey*. What Tommy is up to is also part of the overall mystery."

Unlike the first game, *Prey 2* will be strictly single-player, but Rhinehart says gamers will still feel they're getting their money's worth. "Because we are focusing on single-player, we're able to create a deeper, richer experience than if we had to split time between single-player and multiplayer. In this open-world game, the player has a wide variety of missions and varied ways to approach those missions,"

he explains. "Beyond the missions, there'll be gameplay opportunities like exploring, finding ambient bounties and collectibles, and taking on challenges throughout the world."

*Prey 2* will adopt an open-world template. "We faced several initial challenges," says Rhinehart. "First off, *Prey 2* is a very vertical game, so we initially devised core rules for developing each location in the world: They have to support combat when approached from multiple directions, and cover needs to be dense so the player and enemies always have cover options, but not so dense that the objects hinder movement." The locales, Rhinehart continues, "contain multiple layers—lower areas for NPCs and general combat/pursuit and upper areas for exploration and player tactical advantage, too." ☺



▼ This alien bad guy is the galaxy's ugliest piñata.

## TOOLS OF THE BOUNTY HUNTER TRADE \\\

Alien tech helps Killian chase down those xeno-criminals. Hover boots allow Killian to safely glide for short distances or slow down after a long fall. Coolest of all will be the anti-gravity grenades, which form a "gravity well" that pulls anyone inside into the air. Expect to use them to pull enemies up from behind cover or trap fleeing targets.

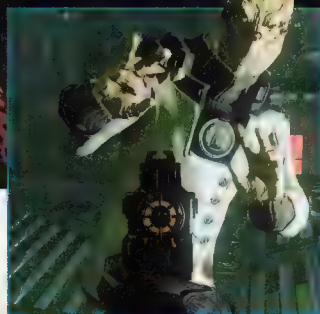


▲ Exodus will have a bright, dust-filled half facing the sun and a dark side with sleazy, neon-lit streets.



▲ When you're a bounty hunter, it doesn't matter if big-headed bystanders get in the way of your blasts.

## ALWAYS ON THE HUNT



Rhinehart: "Some missions in the game are procedurally generated, such as ambient bounties. They're rationed out, so the player isn't encountering them constantly and burning out. Technically, there are an infinite number of them, but the rewards given—money and reputation—are appropriately scaled based upon the difficulty of the encounter."

PS3 XBOX 360 PC

## GAME DETAILS



### PREY 2

#### INFO

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks  
Developer: Human Head  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC  
MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE  
Single-player only

#### GENRE

First-person shooter

#### RELEASE DATE

2012

#### SUITABLE FOR

Fans of the *Men in Black* movies, people who wanted *Halo 3* and *GTA4* to make babies

## NOT OUT YET! PLAY THIS!



The handheld *Rage HD* ranks amongst the best-looking games on the iPad. So, just imagine how great *Prey 2* and the full version of *Rage* will look on your HDTV.



#### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Didn't take 10 years to make
- ♥ Loads of inventive weapons and gadgets
- ♥ Being a bounty hunter on an alien planet



#### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Single-player only
- ✗ Creepy alien character designs will give you nightmares

PC

GAME DETAILS



# TERA

## INFO

Publisher: En Masse Entertainment  
Developer: Bluehole Studio  
Platforms: PC

**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**  
MMORPG

**GENRE**  
MMORPG

**RELEASE DATE**  
TBD 2011

**SUITABLE FOR**  
MMO rookies and curious genre veterans

## NOT OUT YET? PLAY THIS!



**RIFT** Rift is a great fantasy MMO with a deep and flexible customization system. You won't need zillions of characters since the numerous "roles" you take on give you, well, roles to play within

## WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Tera's colorful, diverse, and unique world could be key in turning the heads needed to lengthen its legs
- ♥ Plenty of races, classes, and abilities to tinker with
- ♥ Beavers with broadswords

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ Many classes sound too similar
- ✖ Simplified approach could be its downfall

# TERA

It's pretty and has great personality—what's the catch?

**W**hen I log on to an online role-playing game, the last thing I expect to see is a band of pandas, puppies, and bunnies, beating on bad guys. I also don't expect it to be so gorgeous and bloody. The gorgeous bit comes from Unreal Engine 3, but mixing cuteness with realism is Tera's own innovation. Much of Tera mimics previous fantasy MMOs, but it sure doesn't look the part of a typical copycat.

Cute critters certainly aren't the core of Tera—they're just a facet of its broader aim for diversity. (I'll take an armored raccoon seriously if they can turn a group of gnomes into a gnarly mess.) If you're a more traditional dungeon romper, elves, horned humanoid, giants, and other typical racial archetypes are available for mixing and matching within Tera's eight classes. A class's speed, skills, weaponry, and defensive abilities determine the kind of combatant you'll become. But however you go at it, you'll be doing plenty of pummeling.

One of the game's main draws is that the combat is far more action-oriented than in other MMORPGs—Tera is fast. The developers are so confident in this regard that not only do they allow gamepads, they encourage you to use them instead of a mouse and keyboard.

If only for that reason, Tera sounds like an online RPG that's up my alley. It also simplifies the genre, probably in hopes to make it more accessible—great! I'm terrified of MMOs. I wonder, though, if separating "big sword guy" and "big ax guy" into two classes, rather than a skill tree, is stretching things a bit thin. I'm excited to find out—something I never thought I'd say about an MMO without "Star Wars" in its title. **B**

**THE COMBAT IS FAR MORE ACTION-ORIENTED THAN IN OTHER MMORPGS**



♥ This dwarf dude looks like he popped out of a metal album cover. Tera has quite the mix of things, artistically.

**DIG PODCASTS: HIT [TINYURL.COM/TERAPODCAST](http://tinyurl.com/terapodcast) TO HEAR THE DEV TEAM TALK TERA**



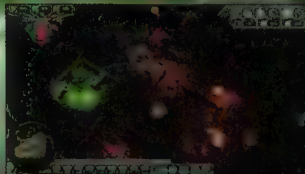
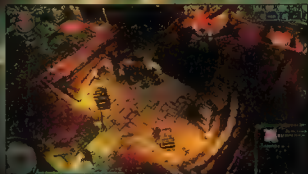
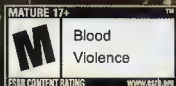
▲ Light this fat frog thing on fire and poke holes in it! Why? Because it's evil, that's why!



▲ Characters in Tera have a more realistic look than in most fantasy RPGs, but it should still run on most rigs.

# DUNGEONS

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Games for Windows



FEATURE

# Welcome to ARKHAM CITY





INTRODUCTION FROM  
MAYOR QUINCY SHARP...

"As mayor of Gotham City, it is my deep displeasure to welcome you to Arkham City, home to some of the country's most dangerous—and mentally unbalanced—super-criminals. If this is your first time here, it may very well be your last."

## An Insider's Guide to the Most Dangerous Tourist Destination in Gotham City

• Words: Chuck Osborn

**A** year has passed since the events of *Batman: Arkham Asylum* and much has changed in Gotham City. Former Arkham warden Quincy Sharp is now Gotham's mayor. With neither Arkham Asylum nor Blackgate Prison in any condition to house all of Gotham's criminals, Mayor Sharp has transformed a section of the city into an open-air prison and renamed it Arkham City. It's a volatile arrangement that has Batman and his allies justifiably concerned.

Existing on an area roughly five times the size of Arkham Island, the prison holds regular criminals and all of Gotham's super-villains, including a convalescent Joker (still recovering following his final fight with Batman at the end of *Arkham Asylum*), Two-Face, and the Riddler. According to developer Rocksteady, the game's story mode will cover eight chapters and will take from 20–25 hours to complete. Once again, you'll be playing as Batman, lured into Arkham

City to search for Catwoman, who has been kidnapped by Two-Face while trying to burglarize his office. The surprise twist is that once she's freed by Batman, Catwoman will be a playable character for roughly 10 percent of the game.

Recently, I was allowed entry into this no-man's-land to witness the urban blight for myself. What follows are my observations on what Arkham City has in store for you this fall.

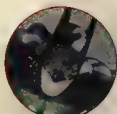
# The Joker's Guide to Who's Who in Arkham City

THE CROWN PRINCE OF CRIME'S FAVORITE HEROES, VILLAINS, AND VICTIMS

## Batman —

"Batty-kins is Gotham City's protector and my faaaaaavorite straight man!"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939)



## The Joker —

"It's me! Your friendly, neighborhood homicidal maniac."

First Appearance: *Batman* #1 (Spring 1940)



## Harley Quinn —

"Harley-girl is the pumpkin to my patch, the maggot to my corpse... until she gets on my nerves. Then it's no more Mr. Nice Sociopath."

First Appearance: *Batman: The Animated Series* (1992)



## Catwoman —

"This widdle putty-tat is a thief first, sometime hero second. She looooves the Bat, but you didn't hear that from me."

First Appearance: *Batman* #1 (Spring 1940)



## Two-Face —

"O! Harvey got splashed with acid as Gotham's D.A. He's got a split face and a split personality!"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #66 (August 1942)



## Robin —

"The Boy Blunder is Bat-fink's junior partner. He's my favorite punching bag...and I mean that literally!"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #38 (April 1940)



## Dr. Hugo Strange —

"Psychiatrist and warden of Arkham City. He thinks Batsy is playboy Bruce Wayne! Now who's crazy?"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #36 (February 1940)



## The Riddler —

"Baffles the Bat's belfry with lame-o mind puzzles. Where's the pizzazz? Where's the body count???"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #140 (October 1948)



## Commissioner Gordon —

"The commish has had it in for me ever since I paralyzed his daughter. C'mon, Jimbo...let it go!"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939)



## Mayor Quincy Sharp —

"Hizzoner was the warden of Arkham Asylum until Bats stopped my lovely riot and Quincy took all the credit. Hey, that's funny! HA-HAHAHAHA!!!!!!"

First Appearance: *Batman: Arkham Asylum* (2009)



## The Penguin —

"Pengy is an odd duck. Once an honest criminal like yours truly, he now pretends to be legit. But we all know who the bird-brains behind most crime in Arkham City is!"

First Appearance: *Detective Comics* #58 (December 1941)



### PLACES TO AVOID

#### CRIME ALLEY

Once located in a well-off neighborhood, this infamous alley was marred by the shocking murders of wealthy philanthropists Thomas and Martha Wayne.

Chance of death



Catwoman will be playable in both Story Mode and Challenge Mode. Her specialty is stealth, but she won't shy away from a fight.



### REQUIRED READING

Want to know about the history of Arkham City and what led to its creation? Check out the five-issue prequel series from DC Comics that bridges the gap between the ending of *Batman: Arkham Asylum* (when Batman cleaned The Joker's clock) and the events of *Batman: Arkham City*, one year later. Like the games, the comic is written by Paul Dini, writer of *Batman: The Animated Series*. You can buy *Batman: Arkham City* the comic at your local comic book store or digitally through [read.dccomics.com](http://read.dccomics.com), the *ComiXology* App for smartphones and tablets, and the PlayStation Store.

#### ► HERE, KITTY...

Catwoman is a master thief armed with a whip, bolas (for tripping up enemies), and caltrops (for slowing them down). She can scale walls and ceilings with her claws, and has a unique slide move.

CATWOMAN IS PLAYABLE  
FOR 10% OF THE GAME



### ▲ BETTER BAT WEAPONS

Batman will carry all the weapons he used in Arkham Asylum, with the addition of smoke pellets to cover his escapes and a radio broadcast frequenter for listening in on transmissions.

### ▼ BETTER BAT COMBAT

Armed with more moves, Batman can momentarily stun enemies with his cape and catch items that are thrown at him. He can even coordinate high-speed distance attacks using his grapple.

### PLACES TO AVOID

#### GOTHAM CATHEDRAL

This towering gothic landmark has a beautiful windowed spire that makes it the perfect sniper's nest for would-be assassins.

Chance of death: ●●●●●

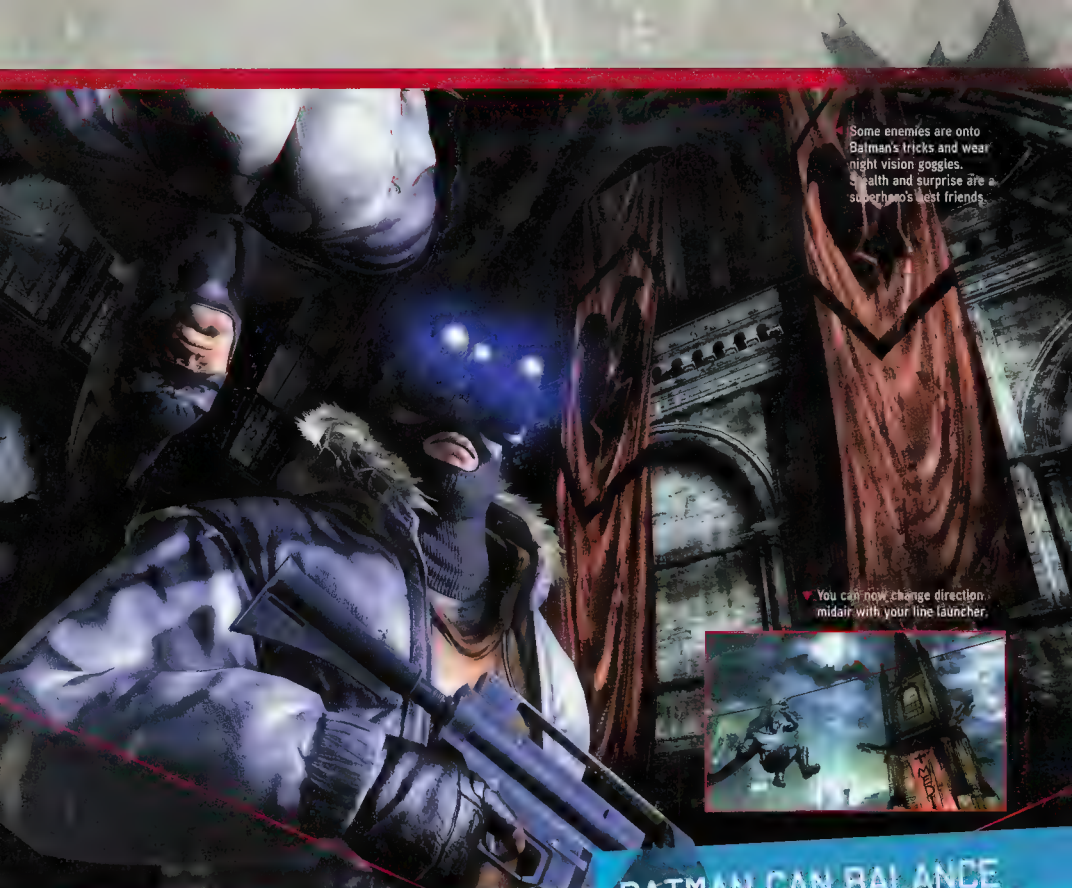
### PLACES TO AVOID

#### ANY ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

These places are magnets for super-villains in search of a lair. Especially avoid buildings that housed gag novelties, ice cream, playing cards, or oversized props.

Chance of death: ●●●●●





Some enemies are onto Batman's tricks and wear night vision goggles. Stealth and surprise are a superhero's best friends.

You can now change direction midair with your line launcher.



#### ▼GOTHAM CITY IMPOSTERS

The gang members in the DLC game Gotham City Imposters model themselves on Batman or Joker.

## BATMAN CAN BALANCE ON WIRES AND RAILINGS

### TOURIST ADVISORY

Be warned that gangs of Jokerz and Bats will be shooting it out in Gotham City in the upcoming Gotham City Imposters, a downloadable first-person shooter that will be available on Xbox Live, PlayStation Network, and PC. Developed by Monolith (Fear 2, Condemned 2) and published by WBIE, the game will pit amateur vigilantes against wannabe villains in wild combat across the city. You'll be able to customize a unique outfit inspired by Batman or The Joker and then battle other players using a wide range of wacky weapons and stylized gadgets. The release date is still to be determined.





#### ▶ SPOT THE STOOLIE

Informants will give up info, so don't beat green-tinted enemies senseless.

#### ▶ KNIGHT WATCHMAN

Batman's detective vision lets him recognize enemies and important items.



STORY MODE WILL TAKE  
20-25 HOURS TO FINISH



#### PLACES TO AVOID ICEBERG LOUNGE

A posh nightclub owned by the Penguin, a "reformed" criminal mastermind. It is a nexus for Gotham's underworld and attracts unsavory characters.

Chance of death:

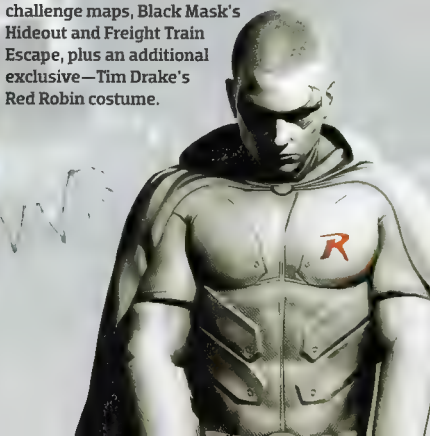
#### ▶ GLIDE TO LIVE

Batman's gliding abilities have received a major upgrade, letting him swoop and ride updrafts. With practice, you can "fly" from one end of Arkham City to the other.



#### A BEST BUY EXCLUSIVE: TIM DRAKE ROBIN PACK!

Pre-order *Batman: Arkham City* at Best Buy and unlock the Tim Drake Robin for play in Challenge Mode. The gymnastic Robin will have unique special moves and gadgets (we bet that a collapsible bo staff will be one of them). The DLC pack will also include two additional exclusive challenge maps, Black Mask's Hideout and Freight Train Escape, plus an additional exclusive—Tim Drake's Red Robin costume.





The Riddler plays a more prominent role this time as a Jigsaw-like presence in *Arkham City*'s optional side quests.

"Riddler Rooms" contain citizens in diabolical deathtraps.



## A SURVIVAL GUIDE TO ARKHAM CITY

OR "HOW TO GO HAND-TO-CLAW WITH THE BAT AND CAT... AND LIVE!"

Often referred to as "the world's greatest detective," Batman has ample opportunity to earn his nickname in *Arkham City*. In one sequence early in the game, Batman saves Catwoman from sniper fire through an uncovered window in Two-Face's office. By activating Detective Mode, you can glean the trajectory of the bullet by focusing on the bullet hole through the window glass and the point of impact on the floor, which places the shooter inside the top of the nearby Gotham Cathedral.

From my playtime, it's obvious that controlling Batman is more fluid and varied than before. Following the spotlight markers (courtesy of police blimps) that let you know where the next objective is, you can run, glide, or swing to your destination. It's also now possible to shoot a grappling hook or line launcher while in the air, changing your direction entirely or giving you a boost of speed. Want to really feel like Batman? Try focusing on an enemy from a distance, and then perform a grapple-boost

takedown that lets you zip to their location and flip them unconscious before they even know you're there.

In another sequence, Harley Quinn gets the drop on you with a group of heavily armed henchmen. You're no match for them on the ground and in the open. Dropping a smoke pellet gives you the chance to grapple up to the gargoyles in the ceiling, where you can move relatively unnoticed and pick them off one by one.

Likewise, Catwoman relies on stealth instead of muscle to steal from the bad guys. She can scale walls and cling to ceilings with her claws, using her Thief Vision to spot shiny valuables to purloin. When discovered, though, the feline fatale uses her natural agility, slashing claws, and whip to subdue any attackers foolish enough to take her on. Her combat style is similar to Batman's, but more fluid and with less brute force. Her slide move is also handy for limboing under low objects or trip wires quickly and quietly. ☹

### GAME DETAILS

#### BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY

##### INFO

Publisher: WB Games  
Developer: Rocksteady  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

##### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

##### GENRE

Action-adventure

##### RELEASE DATE

October 18, 2011

##### SUITABLE FOR

Ultimate superhero fans who want the ultimate superhero game

### WANT MORE? SCAN THIS!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch the official trailer for *Batman: Arkham City*.



### WHAT'S GREAT

- ♥ *Arkham City* is about five times the size of *Arkham Asylum*
- ♥ Catwoman is a playable character
- ♥ Even better combat and detective gameplay than in the first game

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT

- ✖ Even with Catwoman along for the ride, there is no co-op or multiplayer support

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# TOP PICKS

**T** TOP PICKS

## RATINGS BREAKDOWN:

@GAMER includes only the best games in our Top Picks section, if you don't see it here, it's probably not worth getting.

- 👍👍👍👍👍 An average game. Just worthy enough to call to your attention.
- 👍👍👍👍👍👍 A good game with some flaws. Fans of the genre will probably enjoy it.
- 👍👍👍👍👍👍👍 An excellent game that we strongly recommend.
- 👍👍👍👍👍👍👍👍 A near-perfect gaming experience.

77

THE WITCHER 2:  
ASSASSINS  
OF KINGS



Hey, meet  
the crew!

@GAMER wants you to know about the best-of-the-best games out now or coming soon, so we've put together a different kind of Geek Squad to help you out.

This month, we ask the gamer panel:

What game are you most looking forward to in the last half of 2011?



**Matt Cabral**

I've got my eye on *The*



**George Jones**

I'm dying to play *Elder*



**Chuck Osborn**

As a long-time comics



**Andy Salisbury**

*Battlefield 3*. The tech



**NOT PICKS**

There weren't any games that didn't make the @GAMER cut this issue!



▼ It seems Alice took things a little too literally when they told her to "cut the cards."

# ALICE: MADNESS RETURNS

Lewis Carroll's original head trip returns to the interactive stage Words: David Chapman

**A**lice: Madness Returns picks up shortly after the events of the original game, American McGee's Alice. Released from Rutledge Asylum after ten years of commitment, Alice still isn't on firm mental ground, and once again gets pulled into a sinister version of her beloved Wonderland. Still haunted by memories of her family's death, this new Wonderland is an even more disturbing reflection of her fractured psyche. With the world literally collapsing around her, Alice must save Wonderland (and her sanity) by unlocking the memories of her past and discovering the truth behind her family's tragic death.

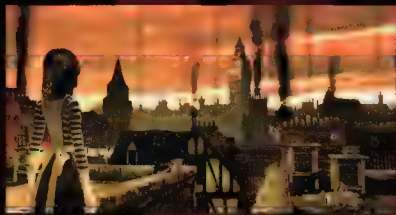
Alice isn't the meek little girl of the Lewis Carroll novels. She's grown up and more than

willing to get her hands dirty in the fight for her sanity. Combat is quick and easy thanks to an effective targeting focus and instant access to Alice's entire arsenal of Wonderland weaponry. When things seem at their worst and Alice is near death, you can tap into her "Hysteria." While Hysteria is active, Alice enters an invulnerable state, giving her a short period of time to tip the scales back in her favor.

While Alice: Madness Returns is a lot of fun to play, the gameplay can get a little repetitive. After the umpteenth jump from platform to platform to reach some randomly placed objective, you can't help but get that "been there, done that" feeling. And while the combat lends itself well to combos, sometimes you're

overwhelmed by the sheer numbers attacking at once, all with different weak points. It's a little frustrating to be hammering away at an eyeball in a teapot while winged bolts attach themselves to you...and a gooey black mass is tossing fireballs at the same time.

These are minor gripes in what's otherwise an amazing, genuine experience. Wonderland, as seen through the eyes of American McGee, is a living, breathing, beautiful thing, just as important as Alice and any of her supporting cast. In the hands of McGee and Spicy Horse, Wonderland literally becomes, true to its name, a land of wonder. Madness Returns tells a great story with a hint of mystery that pulls you further down the rabbit hole. ☺



▲ Wonderland isn't the only Alice that's seen better days. Victorian London is falling apart at the seams as well.



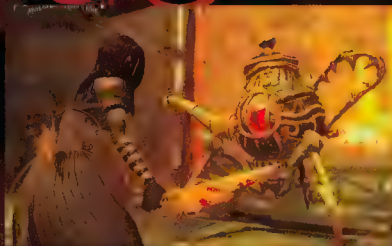
▲ What's black and white and red all over? Despite her prior defeat, the Red Queen still has an obvious influence in Wonderland.

## "PREVIOUSLY ON ALICE..."



It's been more than a decade between the release of the first Alice game and *Alice: Madness Returns*, so even if you have played the original, you might need a refresher. Well, EA's got you covered, as all new copies of *Madness Returns* will include a

single-use code to download American McGee's *Alice* for the PS3, Xbox 360, or PC.



I'm a little teapot, short and stout. Here is my handle, here is my big red demonic eye glaring at you with murderous intent.



▲ Alice isn't the only one in *Madness Returns* who's not playing with a full deck.



# GAME DETAILS

## ALICE: MADNESS RETURNS

**PUBLISHER:** Electronic Arts  
**DEVELOPER:** Spicy Horse  
**PLATFORMS:** PS3, Xbox 360, PC  
**REVIEWED ON:** Xbox 360

**MULTIPLAYER:** No  
**SINGLE-PLAYER ONLY**

**GENRE:**  
 Action

**RELEASE DATE:**  
 June 14, 2011

**SUITABLE FOR:**  
 Those who remember that fairy tales aren't just kiddie stories

### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ An amazingly engaging plot that plays like a fantastic and dark fairy tale mystery
- ♥ American McGee's twisted vision of Wonderland is a true work of art

### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✕ Gameplay can get a bit repetitive at times
- ✕ Alice is often overwhelmed in combat, with little in the way of defense

- Fractured fairy tale
- Snicker-snack
- "Here, kitty"

OVERALL RATING:



4.5  
 5  
 Gamer



◀ Due to Alice's mental state, Wonderland has gone from odd to downright scary.

## AMERICAN MCGEE'S FAIRY TALE LIFE

Madness Returns may be American McGee's latest take on a classic, but after releasing the first Alice, McGee began to develop twisted versions of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Red Riding Hood* for unreleased games and film projects and put darker spins on fairy tales in the episodic game series, *American McGee's Grimm*.



▶ "How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.  
 "You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."  
 —Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll

## ANDY SAYS:



It's no surprise that McGee has said "I want to be the next Walt Disney, only a little more wicked." *Madness Returns* is a twisted take on what was already a wild piece of literature, and you should be aware that playing it may result in sensory overload.

## GAME PLAY



## THINGS THAT GO "SNICKER-SNACK"

Alice isn't going into the dangerous Wonderland unprepared. Returning in the sequel is the classic Vorpal Blade, a giant-sized butcher knife best known for going "One two! One two! And through and through" to slay the Jabberwocky. Alice also goes ballistic, courtesy of the Duchess's mighty Pepper Grinder. And while it's no flamingo croquet mallet, Alice's massive Hobby Horse can bludgeon nightmares away. Finally, Alice's mortar-like Tea Pot can launch a tempest of molten tea at foes.

# DEUS EX

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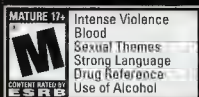
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PS3 XBOX360  
Wii 3DS DS**TRANSFORMERS:  
DARK OF THE MOON****INFO**

Publisher: Activision  
Developer: High Moon Studios  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, 3DS, DS

Reviewed on: Xbox 360

**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**

Up to 10 players online (PS3, Xbox 360); 2 players local (Wii, DS); single-player only on 3DS

**GENRE**

Action

**RELEASE DATE**

June 14, 2011

**SUITABLE FOR**

Children of the '80s, adults of the '10s

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS

**WHAT'S GREAT**

- Excellent level design makes for some fun moments
- Custom characters and leveling up in multiplayer
- Entertaining and challenging boss battles

**WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT**

- Story isn't particularly engaging
- Motion controls in Stealth Force mode feel slippery

- Non-stop action
- Increased firepower
- CoD-style multiplayer

OVERALL  
RATING:

/5

Gamer

# TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON

A surprisingly fun action-shooter • Words: George Jones

Two years after the Autobots defeated the Decepticons, Megatron goes back into destroy—the Earth mode, this time staging a diabolical plan from the moon. The videogame incarnation of this summer's Michael Bay blockbuster, *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, depicts the events leading up to this attack, including the origin story of the Decepticons' new assassin, Shockwave.

Maybe it's the Activision publishing label—or maybe I've just been playing an obscene amount of *Call of Duty: Black Ops*—but as I played through *Dark of the Moon*, I found myself unable to avoid noticing gameplay similarities between this action-shooter and the *CoD* franchise. I sprinted, ducked (kind of), fired on the enemy, and advanced to gain ground. I used grenades for cover and sought higher ground for tactical advantage.

You control a different Transformer in each of the game's 18 levels, which range from the South America jungle to a burnt-out Detroit city to a top-secret military facilities in Siberia. The above-average level design emphasizes nonstop action, interesting setpiece battles, and challenging boss encounters.

*Dark of the Moon* also features a revamped and high-adrenaline multiplayer mode that enables you to choose and customize one of four different character classes: Scout, Commander, Hunter, and Warrior. Experience points you earn can be used to level up and unlock new skills. Deathmatch and Conquest modes feel more like a hardcore shooter than we expected. And that's a good thing.

If you like the *Transformers*—or can suspend your disbelief long enough—you'll be pleasantly surprised by *Dark of the Moon*.



You get to control multiple characters, including Bumblebee, Ironhide, and Optimus Prime.

**GET YOUR GAME FACE ON**

*Stealth Force* Mode adds some interesting new options.

**WIL SAYS:**

By applying more traditional third-person shooter mechanics and level design to the *Transformers* franchise, *High Moon* has come up with a surprisingly entertaining action title.

Previously, *Transformers* games offered up two modes of play: a combat-oriented robot mode and a pursuit-oriented vehicle mode. This year, a new mode—*Stealth Force*—grants us a combination of the two. *Stealth Force* Mode combines the maneuverability of vehicle mode with unique weapons, heavier armor, the ability to strafe, and improved targeting abilities via the left shoulder button.



# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME 3D

Nintendo's classic game gets some added depth • Words: Andy Eddy

Through the game industry's history, Nintendo's Zelda franchise is among the most popular—and 1998's *Ocarina of Time* (originally for the Nintendo 64) has been perhaps the favorite individual title. Now Nintendo has remastered *Ocarina*, so to speak, for the new 3DS handheld, which brings the game to a new audience—and in a different form to its existing fans.

Those of you who haven't already played *Ocarina* are in for a treat, as this is a fun game packed with action and adventure. It sometimes feels like a cartoon that you're controlling, given its smooth animation during exploration and combat. You're eased into the controls and action, and it's great for all ages.

Zelda vets will find the familiar game they know and love—with a bit extra. Aside from the stellar 3D visuals, which does enhance the gameplay, Nintendo has added stones that enable you to get a cinematic look at how to resolve certain situations. If you go into the first-person view, you can also use the 3DS's built-in gyroscope to move your perspective by moving the system around—though in a minigame that uses this mode exclusively, I found my view shifted off-center the more times that I played.

**Cheeky Cameos**  
Mario and Luigi, Link, and Ingo are apparently vacationing in Hyrule this year.

Another negative is that it can be hard, especially during heavy action, to keep the 3DS in its viewing "sweet spot," which can affect gameplay. It may be more an idiosyncrasy of the hardware, but it seems to affect *Ocarina* more than other games I've played. It's a surprise no StreetPass swapping was added.

*Ocarina* in 3D is still as great as it ever was. Its appeal on 3DS, though, seems limited to mostly newbies and Zelda superfans who must have everything from the franchise. ☺



## IT'S A LOCK

Despite its small size, the 3DS has enough buttons to enable versatile control. In *Ocarina of Time 3D*, a press of the left shoulder targets something you want to inspect or fight, so you won't lose time changing the camera's perspective.

You Know Him... Link is the hero—though you can set his name to whatever you



3DS

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME 3D

## INFO

Publisher: Nintendo  
Developer: Nintendo/Grezzo  
Platforms: 3DS

## MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

## GENRE

Action-adventure

## RELEASE DATE

June 19, 2011

## SUITABLE FOR

Zelda nostalgia buffs or those who never played the original

## WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ The facelift makes the world even more vibrant and alive
- ♥ Exploiting the 3DS's hardware gives you more control options
- ♥ Hint movies are an added benefit for new or younger players

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ It is the same game, so Zelda veterans might not be that excited
- ✗ The 3DS's narrow viewing field during high-action sequences may make it tougher to follow

- Danger
- Daring
- Depth

OVERALL RATING:



4.5  
/5

© Gamer



► Your mission is to save Lumi and Eden from musical aliens in this visual masterpiece.

# CHILD OF EDEN

Can synesthesia shake your  
words? Cazzle Cuevas

**F**or the love of a zen-like cybernetic shooter Rez comes *Child of Eden*, a game that's... uh, just like Rez. In all fairness, *Child of Eden* does offer brilliant, high-definition visuals and entrancing music, and it uses the Kinect for hands-free control, which makes it a "new and improved" version—sort of Rez's hotter, younger brother.

*Eden* is composed of five levels, with only three weapons in your offensive arsenal. Your primary weapon locks on to multiple targets as you move the targeting cursor over them by waving one hand; jerking your hand back fires at all of them. The Tracer, which is controlled by your other hand, delivers a constant stream of bullets and is good for enemies needing a more concentrated attack. The last weapon is Euphoria, a bomb pickup that you can activate by throwing both hands up, which destroys all enemies on-screen (obviously helpful when you're overwhelmed). Periodic Muzugun designs, creatures emit various sounds when they're struck or destroyed, which can turn an alien killing spree into a euphonious medley of bleeps and bass.

Controlling the action is pretty easy—it's just a matter of moving your arms in front of you like Tom Cruise in *Minority Report*. As much fun as this is, it does get tiring, especially in levels where you need to move quickly to destroy a lot of enemies. Thankfully, you can also play the game with your controller, which is a lot easier—but that kind of bypasses the game's Kinect-based uniqueness.

## GAMEPLAY



**MORE TO THE SCORE, FOR SURE** \\\ The game differentiates between the Kinect and the regular controller, and your score when you play the level using the Kinect is considered different than the one you get when playing with a controller.



## WIL SAYS:

Making a Kinect shooter was an interesting risk to take. Maybe the unique gameplay will be appealing enough that players won't mind the extra "work" required.

At first, *Child of Eden* feels lacking in features for a full-priced game, with few levels and weapons. In order to advance to the next level you must earn enough stars, which is determined by your rank at the end of a level. Earning stars and unlocking new collectibles gets you to replay levels, but that sort of repetition can make the game kind of boring after a while. Yet the stunning visuals and trance-based music are very appealing. *Child of Eden* clearly isn't for all tastes, and whether its good points outweigh its bad ones is up to you. If you loved Rez, there's a good chance that you'll enjoy a visit to Eden.

PS3 XBOX 360

## GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



### CHILD OF EDEN

**INFO**  
Publisher: Ubisoft  
Developer: Q Entertainment  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360  
Reviewed on: Xbox 360

**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**  
Single-player only

**GENRE**  
Shooter

**RELEASE DATE**  
June 14, 2011 (PS3 scheduled for September 2011)

**SUITABLE FOR**  
Audiophiles and folks who couldn't get enough of Rez



### WHAT'S GREAT

- ♥ Amazing visuals and audio that cater to your senses
- ♥ Cool unlockables that keep you playing the game



### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT

- ✖ Gameplay gets repetitive
- ✖ Low number of levels keeps it from feeling like a full game

gamer

- Futuristic
- Electro-symphonic
- Visually stimulating

OVERALL RATING:



2.75  
/5



▼ You're going up against the biggest, rudest, and nastiest Hell has to offer.

# SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED

Garcia Holspur and his girlfriend are in for a devil of a time. • Words: Heidi Kemp



**MY LIVID PONY** \\\ This steed isn't so noble when it's farting out darkness. Yes, really.

▼ Take down this messy, fleshy foe with delightfully named weapons, such as the "Teether."

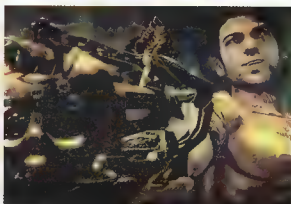




Visine Won't Do  
In some cases,  
"shoot him be-  
tween the eyes"  
takes more effort.

## STAGES ARE FULL OF CLEVER GIMMICKS...

### TALENT SHOW



**S**hadows of the Damned wastes no time putting you in the thick of action. You start the game off with a cacophony of bangs and bloodshed in the shoes of Garcia Hotspur, a foul-mouthed demon hunter, as he fights off a horde of hellspawn. He's too late to save his girlfriend from being captured by the king of the underworld, however, and come Hell or high water, he's gonna get her back.

Well, forget that high water part—Shadows of the Damned is a delightfully crass and gory trip to the bowels of Hell. Accompanied by Johnson, a chattering skull who morphs into various firearms, Garcia's out to rip apart any demon foolish enough to come between him and his constantly imperiled true love.

Hell is quite the interesting environment, filled with dilapidated buildings, walls of flesh and guts, puddles of unsanitary fluids, and even the occasional demonic propaganda poster. Garcia won't be able to ogle the scenery too long, however, as the locals don't take kindly to his trespassing. Fortunately for you, Garcia's expertise is negotiations with guns and melee weapons. The combat control scheme will feel familiar to fans of Resident Evil 4, but even if you haven't played that game Shadows doesn't take long to learn. As you progress, you'll be able to augment Garcia and Johnson with new weapons and ability-boosting red jewels, while ammo and restorative booze can be found or purchased from a vomiting, hee-hawing shopkeeper named Christopher.

Stages in Shadows are packed full of clever gimmicks, particularly the unique "darkness" gameplay element. Darkness creates areas of effect that sap Garcia's vitality, but also have environment-altering properties, such as revealing hidden switches and changing enemy behavior. Using and combating the darkness in various ways makes for very intense, fun enemy encounters, and adds interesting twists to what would otherwise be routine stage progression. Most satisfying of all are the grandiose boss fights that challenge you to use your wits and weapons in equal doses. There are a few hiccups here and there—the graphics and animation are spotty at points, and the load times when entering new areas or reviving are aggravating—but when the overall package is this fun, it's easy to forgive its foibles. And one thing's certain: After Shadows of the Damned, you'll never look at strawberries the same way again. ☺



Shadows is one of those wild, twisted games that comes over from Japan now and again. As with many of its developers' previous works, it's a challenging, irresistible game that refuses to let you look away.

PS3 XBOX 360

## GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



### SHADOWS OF THE DAMNED

#### INFO

Publisher: Electronic Arts  
Developer: Grasshopper  
Manufacture  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360  
Reviewed on: Xbox 360

#### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

#### GENRE

Action

#### RELEASE DATE

June 21, 2011

#### SUITABLE FOR

Demon hunters with an appetite for blood (and toilet humor)

#### WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Immensely satisfying methods of demon slaughter
- ♥ Clever boss and puzzle designs that challenge, but don't frustrate
- ♥ Crazy, over-the-top humor and ridiculously gory atmosphere

#### WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Lengthy loading times
- ✗ Gore and constant sexual, scatological humor may be too much for some

- Guts and glory
- Skulls and crossbo(w)nies
- Flaming poo

#### OVERALL RATING:



4.25  
/5



PS3 XBOX 360 PC



## BRINK

(Xbox 360)  
 Publisher: Bethesda  
 Developer: Splash Damage  
 Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC  
 Reviewed on: Xbox 360

MULTIPLAYER, ONLINE  
 Up to 16 players online

GENRE  
 First-person shooter

RELEASE DATE  
 May 10, 2011

SUITABLE FOR  
 Team players of all stripes



GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS

♥ Class choices and varied objectives can lead to tense, strategic battles

♥ Parkour mechanics let you climb walls and overcome obstacles with ease

✖ Playing solo often feels futile, thanks to inconsistent bots

✖ Lag persists and can make matches nearly unplayable

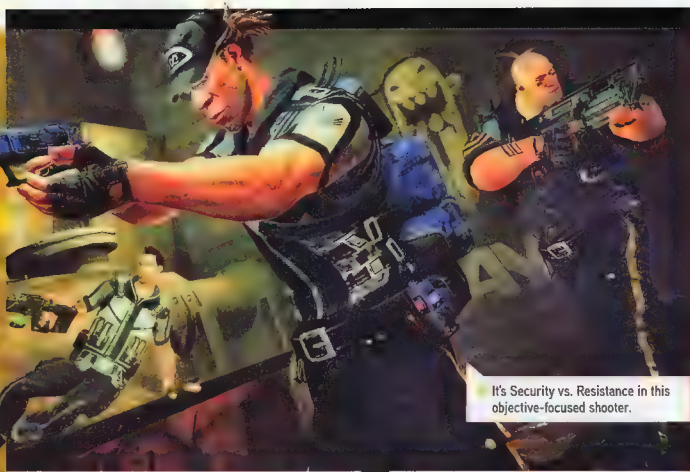
✖ Recurring visual issues, whether online or off

- Team warfare
- Free running
- Lag explosion

OVERALL  
 RATING:



GAMER



It's Security vs. Resistance in this objective-focused shooter.

## BRINK

Francin and fun, but too often futile

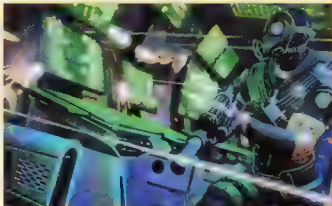
Words: Andrew Hayward

**B**rink plays like Team Fortress 2 mixed with Mirror's Edge, and looks like a first cousin of Crackdown. This class-based team shooter's curious concoction proves a unique brew. Across 16 missions, you'll play as Security or Resistance—opponents trying to, respectively, save or escape The Ark, a utopian city now in disarray. Each objective-based mission can be played offline with bots, online with teammates against AI-controlled foes, or fully online with eight players on each side.

It's a distinct approach, and the parkour (free running) elements add a twist to the standard shooter, but the free-form campaign structure doesn't always benefit this colorful creation. Playing solo, you'll often work alongside brain-dead bots that don't pursue objectives, while the bare-bones storyline seems incomplete in any configuration. Playing online makes it much more interesting, but even after downloading the release-day patch, it wasn't rare to have missions completely derailed by lag. And online or off, Brink consistently struggles with texture-loading issues, which significantly mar the visual experience.

In the midst of a tense, lag-free online battle, Brink's better elements do emerge, with well-designed skirmishes that reward diverse, task-focused teams. Sadly, finding those quality moments amid the persistent bugs and a completely forgettable single-player offering remains the biggest challenge for this inconsistent shooter. **C**

## AROUND THE ARK



Typical mission objectives include hacking terminals, defending items, and escorting allies.



The SMART movement system lets you scale obstacles simply by holding a button.

## CLASS WARFARE

Which class should you play? If you like to plant explosives and toss Molotovs, go Soldier. Building and repairing structures? Engineer is for you. If healing and reviving are your things, be a Medic. If you like hacking and disguises, be the Operative. Quite likely, you'll swap between them to match the myriad objectives.

RAZER

Naga

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GAMING MOUSE



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# DUNGEON SIEGE III

It's a faster, simpler version of *Dragon Age*. That's good—and bad. Words: George Jones

**A**ntagonist Jayne Kassinder has an outsized presence in *Dungeon Siege III*. Right from the start, she's painted as an über villain, the woman responsible for wiping out the Kingdom of Ehb's 10th Legion. This is problematic, because you are (or were) an enlisted soldier in the 10th Legion.

Kassinder's ubiquitous presence—it seems like her name gets mentioned 20-plus times in the first 20 minutes—is a sign that Square Enix and developer Obsidian Entertainment are attempting to beef up this series's storytelling abilities. The Kingdom of Ehb feels more alive, vibrant, and interesting than it has before, with interesting towns and quirky villagers. It's nowhere near the depth BioWare and Bethesda achieve on a regular basis, but it's a start.

Also new to the series this time around is the presence of several new wrinkles around combat, inventory management, and co-operative multiplayer modes.

The core play mechanics are pretty standard. You take on quests and missions from a variety of sources. Some of these missions

are optional, while others are central to the game's storyline. Most of these quests are simple go-for or go-to runs, and almost all of them entail combat in some way, shape, or form. After you win battles, you collect all kinds of loot including money, health, magic items, weapons, and armor.

This being an action-RPG, combat is the name of the game. Initially I found myself feeling like combat consisted of a great deal of button mashing, but after an hour or so, I began to embrace the more subtle approach *Dungeon Siege* encourages. Blocking plays an instrumental role in battle, and the ability to change stances permits an interesting tactical variance.

This works particularly well with multicharacter parties using ranged weapons and magic.

The way *Dungeon Siege* handles loot and inventory management is interesting. I've never been tempted by such a tantalizing set of trade-offs and opportunity costs when deciding between two sets of armor or weapons. Are you willing to sacrifice armor or agility for increased attack power? The designers have done a great job of forcing you to weigh your options.

Aside from lacking the depth games such as *Dragon Age* have, the only serious problem with *Dungeon Siege III* is that the camera controls prevent you from looking straight ahead and rob the game of many dramatic moments. "Look up ahead" has no real meaning here, because you literally can't.

This said, *Dungeon Siege III* is a fine, if slightly standard, RPG romp that will appeal to gamers looking for a quick fantasy fix. It's not genius, but it works. **C**

▼ This is one challenging dungeon romp; expect to die often in *Dungeon Siege III*.



UNCONVENTIONAL,  
QUIRKY, AND A LITTLE  
ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES

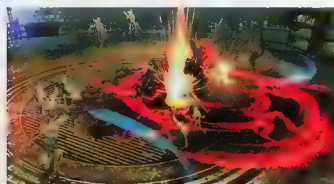
▼ Magic and guns? Sign us up. Wait, did you say magic guns?!



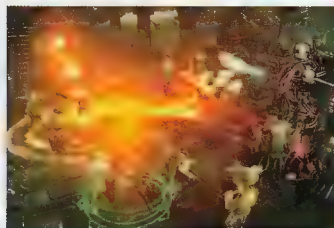
## RPG STEAMPUNK

One of the things I like best about *Dungeon Siege III* is that it is one of the only role-playing games that allows characters to use guns, such as the blunderbuss. It makes sense contextually—in a fantasy world full of magic, why shouldn't gunpowder exist?

## COMBAT WITH A TWIST



Combat in *Dungeon Siege III* is fairly streamlined; you have far fewer spells and abilities than you do in such games as *Dragon Age*, but the way you use these abilities has a few unexpected and interesting wrinkles. One example of such a wrinkle is the ability to adopt different stances during combat. These stances permit you different attack, defense, and spell-casting abilities.



## DROP-IN MULTIPLAYER

Another interesting new feature in *Dungeon Siege III* is a co-op mode, which allows you to drop in with your friends to drop into co-op at any time. When you begin co-op mode, any non-human-controlled characters in your party will be taken over by AI. When you drop into a MP session and choose an available character, you inherit that character's health, status, and equipment.

## ANDY SAYS:

*Dungeon Siege III* is one of those games where you notice every single wart and imperfection, but still find yourself wanting to keep playing.



PS3 XBOX 360 PC

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



## DUNGEON SIEGE III

### INFO

Publisher: Square Enix  
Developer: Obsidian Entertainment  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, PC  
Reviewed on: PS3, PC

### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Co-op mode (up to 4 players);  
Co-op Campaign (up to 8  
players); PvP mode

### GENRE

Action-RPG

### RELEASE DATE

June 21, 2011

### SUITABLE FOR

Fans of the genre or series;  
younger or less experienced  
RPG gamers

## WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Interesting multiplayer modes
- ♥ Inventory management creates some tough decisions
- ♥ Visually appealing graphics

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✗ Camera controls are frustrating
- ✗ Combat mechanics feel limited at times
- ✗ Lots of untapped story potential here

- Guns in an RPG!
- Interesting combat
- Interesting multiplayer co-op

OVERALL  
RATING:



4  
/5

© Gamer



XBOX 360 PC



GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS

## FABLE III

## INFO

Publisher: Microsoft  
Developer: Lionhead Studios  
Platforms: PC (also available on Xbox 360)  
Reviewed on: PC

MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE  
2-player online co-op

## GENRE

Action-RPG

## RELEASE DATE

May 17, 2011 (PC)

## SUITABLE FOR

Gamers with funny bones waiting to be tickled

## WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Co-op mode is a blast!
- ♥ Tons of creative side quests
- ♥ Extremely detailed game world

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✕ Too many Fedex quests
- ✕ Combat can get tedious
- ✕ Humor often undercuts the story

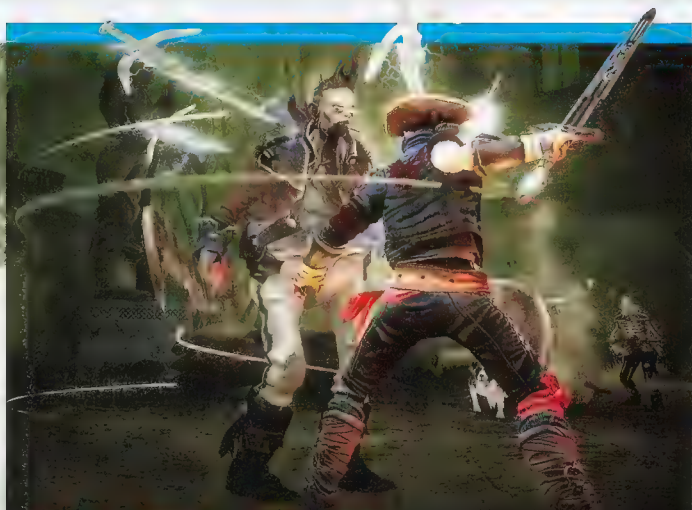
- Flatulent
- Promiscuous
- Fully baked?

OVERALL RATING:



4.5/5

GAMER



## FABLE III

Save the realm—one fart, fornication, and fight at a time! • Words: Steve Klei

**A**t its core *Fable III* is a port, and it shows. While the world of Albion looks luscious at times, the somewhat blocky character models and "Xbox-esque" interface remind you that this is console-strapped tech at play.

But, it's a very good port, and if you've waited to play it on the PC you are rewarded with the best possible experience. You get the ability to play in higher resolutions and in 3D (see sidebar), all the added content included in the Xbox 360's limited edition (new quest, region, outfit, and dog breed), and a "bonus" Hardcore Mode.

The storyline—in which you save the kingdom by usurping an evil-minded king (your brother)—is a bit staid, certainly, but it's in the "how you go about it" that the game shines. People react to you based on your actions. Go around murdering folks, sleeping around, and farting and burping in everyone's faces, and you'll see the consequences manifest around you. (Yes, you can do all of this—and a whole lot more, too.)

While I never quite got bored with the repetitive nature of the combat mechanics, I can see where other people might. Even still, the humor may just save the game here for you—the game is chock full of extremely creative laugh-out-loud moments.

*Fable III* is definitely light on the RPG elements you may be used to on the PC—but it does pile on the fun.



## 3D EXPERIENCE



If you have a 3D-capable display, compatible NVIDIA GPU, and 3D Vision glasses, you can play *Fable III* in stereoscopic 3D—and it's a true visual treat. (Take that, consoles!) Just make sure you have the latest drivers installed (\$75.33 at press time), and you should be good to go.

## ANDY SAYS



It's surprising to have a PC port come out seven months after its Xbox 360 debut, but if *Fable III* is new to you, there's a lot to enjoy.



**GAME  
OF THE  
MONTH**



◀ This is a Draug. He really doesn't like you much.

# THE WITCHER 2: ASSASSINS OF KINGS

Four years definitely makes a difference • Words Jordan Bachman

**P**olish developer CD Projekt's initial attempts with *The Witcher* saga makes for a sad tale. Despite receiving enormous amounts of praise from the gaming press for its solid gameplay, engrossing narrative, and dark, well-realized world, *The Witcher* suffered from a slew of technical issues at the outset of its holiday launch and simply didn't sell that well. Now, four years and a custom-built graphics engine later, CD Projekt throws its hat back into the ring with *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*—a sequel that takes the groundwork laid out by the original and improves upon it in every way.

You once again take on the role of Geralt—a mutant monster-slayer for hire. Having been framed for a king's murder, you must use your talent with

the sword, magic, and alchemical potions to find the real assassins and clear your name. The *Witcher 2*'s combat has been streamlined for a much more action-oriented approach, while the inclusion of magical attacks and stat-altering potions ensure that the sequel loses none of the strategic complexity that the series is known for. Likewise, Geralt's world is still just as bleak, filled to bursting with political corruption and social unrest.

With the main quest lasting over 20 hours and an additional 30 hours in side quests, there's plenty for RPG fans to sink their teeth into. Add to that 16 different possible endings and a dizzying level of character customization and you'll keep coming back. Put simply, *The Witcher 2* is a masterpiece. **C**

## MONSTER HUNTING FOR IDIOTS

*The Witcher 2* tracks your knowledge of the various monster breeds to determine your effectiveness when fighting them. If you're planning on living for more than five minutes, you'll need to research the local monster breeds by purchasing tomes and books that detail their strengths and weaknesses. Don't worry, it's more fun than it might sound.



Gamers who aren't big on RPGs might want to consider *The Witcher 2* for its fast-paced combat and solid action. It's no plodding tabletop-turned-computer game.

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS



**THE WITCHER 2:  
ASSASSINS OF KINGS**

**INFO**  
Publisher: Atari  
Developer: CD Projekt Red  
Platforms: Xbox 360, PC  
Reviewed on: PC

**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**  
Single-player only

**GENRE**  
RPG

**RELEASE DATE**  
May 17, 2011 (Xbox 360  
release date not available yet)

**SUITABLE FOR**  
Role-playing gamers looking for a truly adult-themed narrative

## WHAT'S GREAT

- ♥ The game looks fantastic
- ♥ Combat is visceral and satisfying
- ♥ Unflinching adult narrative

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT

- ✖ Fairly steep system requirements
- ✖ Your rapidly deteriorating social life

- Mutant monster killer
- Dark adult narrative
- PC purists rejoice

OVERALL  
RATING:



**5**  
/5

PS3 XBOX 360  
Wii PC DS

## CARS 2

**INFO**  
 Publisher: Disney Interactive Studios  
 Developer: Avalanche Software  
 Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, PC, Mac, DS  
 Reviewed on: Xbox 360

**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**  
 2-4 players splitscreen

**GENRE**  
 Racing

**RELEASE DATE**  
 June 21, 2011

**SCHEDULE FOR**  
 Disney maniacs with a lead foot

GAME DETAILS AND RATINGS

## WHAT'S GREAT:

- ♥ Lots of unique characters
- ♥ Cool gameplay tricks keep things fresh
- ♥ Great fun with friends

## WHAT'S NOT SO GREAT:

- ✖ No online multiplayer
- ✖ A little heavy on the repetition
- ✖ Needs more tracks

OVERALL  
RATING:3.5  
/5

GAMER



▼ Leave it to Disney to make vehicle combat more family friendly.

## CARS 2

The crew returns with a few new tricks under the hood Words: David Chapman

**D**isney/Pixar's anthropomorphized cars have pulled out of pit road once again in a new high-octane sequel. And it's only natural that, with a new movie, there would be the inevitable movie tie-in.

In *Cars 2: The Video Game*, Mater, McQueen, and all their friends are now secret agents-in-training for C.H.R.O.M.E., proving their mettle through a vigorous training regimen of simulated missions. These different missions include the demolition derby-styled Arena; shoot-'em-up Battle Races; capture the flag Disruptor matches; last man-standing Survivor; and (a personal favorite of mine) Hunter, which pits you and your teammates against an assembly line's worth of grunt cars while they make their way to a specific target.

Taking some air out of the *Cars 2* experience is that the game lacks any support for online play. Multiplayer is limited to four-player splitscreen

action, so you'll have to call friends over to share in the fun. And even though *Cars 2* has a diverse cast of more than 20 unlockable characters, the number of available tracks and locations seems surprisingly light by comparison.

Despite these speed bumps, *Cars 2* manages to speed ahead of the usual movie tie-in mediocrity. The game is fast and fun, if somewhat repetitive at times. It's good for a solo cruise, and better when carpooling with a few buddies.



Balance means that a Formula One racer can fall behind—or a rusty tow truck can take the flag.



## UNDER THE HOOD

There's more to *Cars 2* than "hit the gas and turn left." Besides attacking with everything from Gatling guns and rocket launchers to landmines and oil slicks, you can earn extra boost and zoom ahead of the competition by pulling off tricks, such as racing backwards, riding on two wheels, and doing backflips.



No road hog, Lightning McQueen shares the spotlight with a cast of over 20 cars.



## ANDY SAYS:

It's a Disney movie game, so if you don't expect *Cars 2: Gran Turismo* or *Cars 2: Forza Motorsport*, you won't be disappointed.

## Mini-reviews:

Of course, size doesn't matter. These games are more than worth your attention.



Curry Burrows goes for the melee bonus.



Play as any one of eight different RE characters, such as Hunk (left) and Jill.



## RESIDENT EVIL: THE MERCENARIES 3D

MATURE 17+



Words: Andy Eddy

Publisher: Capcom • Developer: Capcom • Platforms: 3DS

Capcom has taken the Mercenary Mode from Resident Evil 4 and 5 and made it a standalone game for 3DS. In it, you face 30 missions spread across five levels, and you—or you and a friend in co-op—need to clear the necessary objectives to earn the best rank possible, using your weapons and melee attacks. Beating a level unlocks the next one.

Mostly Mercenaries 3D is an all-out zombie-slaying party, but trying to achieve the best “SS” rank will keep you playing over and over. There are also 50 medals for you to ring up (such as compiling 100 headshots or playing for 14 consecutive days) and a skill tree for each of the eight characters that you can use to enhance your abilities. The visuals can be claustrophobic on the small screen, but you’ll have a blast blasting those blasted undead...for wave after wave after wave.



**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**  
2 player co-op, local or online  
**GENRE** Action  
**RELEASE DATE**  
June 28, 2011  
**SUITABLE FOR**  
Card-carrying Zombie  
Haters Club members

**OVERALL RATING:**

4.5/5



## PAC-MAN & GALAGA DIMENSIONS



Words: Andy Eddy

Publisher: Namco Bandai • Developer: Namco Bandai • Platforms: 3DS

No, it's not a typo: Namco Bandai has indeed given us a game bundle revolving around those two timeless arcade franchises.

*Dimensions* gives us exact re-creations of the original coin-ops (though *Galaga* is mighty small on the 3DS screen), and also adds other variations you may already know: the challenging Pac-Man Championship (XBLA/PSN) and the twisted *Galaga* Legions (XBLA). Meanwhile, the winners are the fresh games that take advantage of the 3DS's unique hardware: *Pac-Man Tilt* requires you to tilt the handheld to manipulate the world and roll Pac-Man into a ball, while *Galaga 3D Impact* is a first-person shooter where moving the 3DS moves the onscreen crosshairs (similar to *Steel Diver*). If there's a disappointment, it's that the 3D doesn't add much.

**MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE**

Single-player only

**GENRE** Action

**RELEASE DATE**

July 26, 2011

**SUITABLE FOR**

Retro gamers looking for a mix of old and new

**OVERALL RATING:**

4.25/5



*Pac-Man Tilt* has you swinging platforms and sloping the landscape by angling the 3DS.



▼ If you ever wished for first-person *Galaga*, *Galaga 3D Impact* should make your day



\*\*\*\*

Apologies to Carl Douglas, but "fast as lightning" does not apply to panda kicks.



Kung Fu training is especially helpful when you find yourself floating in a dark void



## KUNG FU PANDA 2

Words: Greg Orlando

Publisher: THQ • Developer: Griptonite • Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, DS • Reviewed on: PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, DS



As the panda creeps toward extinction, we can at least admire the noble creature's proclivity toward the martial arts, if not its inclination toward by-the-numbers movie-to-game translations.

As Po the panda martial artist, you kick butt and sometimes take names, with variations depending on the platform: The Nintendo DS version offers turn-based role playing; the Wii and Xbox versions utilize the platforms' motion-sensing Remote and Kinect, respectively, for waggle-laden fighting; and the PS3 provides strait-laced brawling. It's all competently done and there are neat touches to be had (such as the DS's Five-Card Po collectible card game, and a frantic rickshaw-race-cum-total-body-workout on Xbox 360). Yet these games only prove it's hard to re-create the movies' charm and goofy good humor. Without these, you're just kicking faces, and that can only carry you so far.



### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only (1-2 players on DS)

GENRE Action-adventure

RELEASE DATE

May 24, 2011

SUITABLE FOR

Five Fingers of Death fans

### OVERALL RATING:

2.5  
2/5



## DYNASTY WARRIORS: GUNDAM 3

Words: David Chapman

Publisher: Namco Bandai • Developer: Omega Force  
Platforms: PS3, Xbox 360 • Reviewed on: Xbox 360



There's only so much you can do with Dynasty Warriors, but adding giant robots is always a good start...and Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3 is no exception.

Slick graphics, new gameplay mechanics, and 50-plus upgradable characters make for an action-packed, arcade-style treat. Just don't expect real depth. The story is a convoluted mess and the game suffers from DW's notoriously repetitive button mashing.

DW:G3 is a polished piece of mecha mayhem that caters to the status quo. For fans of the previous games, there's a lot more of everything they've grown to love, but the series still fails to offer newcomers enough reason to jump into the thick of battle.



### MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

2-4 players online

GENRE Action

RELEASE DATE

June 28, 2011

The usual Dynasty Warriors crowd, mecha maniacs

### OVERALL RATING:

3.25  
3/5



Beautiful specimens! Watch as they extend their wings to appear larger. Magnificent.



Well, not every robot can look cool.



# THE SIMS 3: GENERATIONS

Words: Nellie Johnson

Publisher: Electronic Arts • Developer: EA/The Sims Studio  
Platforms: PC

We Sims fans are among the most faithful gaming fans around, but pleasing us ain't easy. That said, this fourth Sims 3 expansion, Generations, is definitely a winner. You'll crack up as you embark on a hilarious 360-degree ride 'round the circle of life in The Sims' classic tongue-in-cheek style. From ankle biter to geezer-hood, you'll dig pulling pranks, suffering pubescent mood swings, planning dream weddings, and even suffering mid-Sim-life crises. Seriously, domestic squabbles and overdue bills have never been this much fun. Best of all, relive your experiences—from when you made the honor roll to when you lost bladder control—through a Facebook-shareable scrapbook.



MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

Single-player only

GENRE Simulation

RELEASE DATE

May 31, 2011

Letting out your inner child

OVERALL RATING:

4/5



This is a very faithful re-creation of a typical @GAMER job interview.



One of the main occupational benefits of being a sniper is wearing ridiculous hats.



This unlucky dude is about to score a date with the hollow point twins.



## SNIPER: GHOST WARRIOR

Words: Matt Cabral

Publisher: City Interactive • Developer: City Interactive • Platforms: PS3 (also on Xbox 360, PC)



Originally released for Xbox 360 and PC, *Sniper: Ghost Warrior* boasted a brilliant concept—an FPS dedicated to the dead-eye sniper class—but undercooked execution and a number of fun-siphoning flaws. Its rerelease on PS3 not only packs in lots of fresh content, but also sets its sights on refining what worked and excising what didn't.

The sharp-shooting AI has been better balanced, and a renewed focus on behind-the-scope action highlights what the title does best. Occasionally wonky stealth mechanics still breed frustration, and the game's run-and-gun moments make you wish you were back behind the crosshairs. Still, there's nothing like the reward for a perfect shot: a slo-mo cinematic of your target's head bursting like a ripe melon.



MULTIPLAYER/ONLINE

2-12 players local or online

GENRE Shooter

RELEASE DATE

June 28, 2011

SUITABLE FOR

Shooter-ists who favor scopes over iron sights

OVERALL RATING:

3.5/5





Words: Mitch Oyer

## DOWNLOAD DIGEST

@GAMER's new review column covers downloadable games, episodes, or add-ons to consider for your console and PC.

Jumpin', cuttin', explorin'...*Outlandin'.*



### OUTLAND

Publisher: Ubisoft • Developer: Housemarque Price: \$10  
Platforms: PSN (TBD), XBLA (April 27, 2011)



Outland culls and combines the coolest concepts from some of gaming's greatest—Prince of Persia, Castlevania, even Ikaruga—but it's missing an immediately identifiable "wow" component to call its own. It's a terrific platformer with a meaty, fully cooperative campaign that's quick to dish out new abilities. New skills lead to plenty of backtracking, but Outland moves so quickly that retracing steps to explore new areas is anything but tedious. Get a grip on the simple combat early, though—these bosses are tough.

OVERALL RATING: 4.25



Adorable? Yep, but *Dungeon Defenders* isn't afraid to slay weeping fellowships.



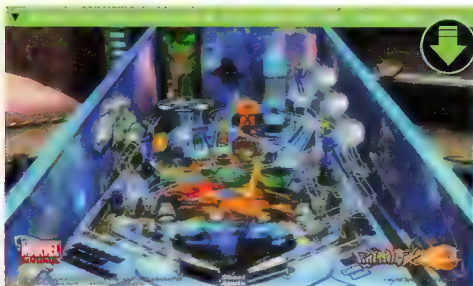
### DUNGEON DEFENDERS

Publisher: Reverb • Developer: Trendy • Price: \$15  
Platforms: PSN (Summer 2011), XBLA (Summer 2011)



Dungeon Defenders has all the right things going for it. It's cute, it's colorful, and it's a behemoth of a tower defense game. Its fantasy-flavored strategy is equal parts offense and defense, with mages and warriors clobbering goblins and wyverns with staves and swords, as well as explosive mines and missile towers. All of this works wonders for keeping co-op teams of four engaged and involved in the terrific campaign maps and numerous creative bonus modes (many of which are cripplingly difficult).

OVERALL RATING: 4.5



### MARVEL PINBALL: FANTASTIC FOUR

Publisher: Zen Studios • Developer: Zen Studios • Price: \$3  
Platforms: PSN (May 17, 2011), XBLA (May 18, 2011)



The Fantastic Four table add-on for Pinball FX 2 is oddly familiar. Essentially, it draws design inspiration from earlier Marvel Pinball tables, specifically Spider-Man and Wolverine. It mashes the best structural parts from those tables while pulling mission ideas from the Iron Man table. If you don't have a frame of reference for these comparisons, shame on you—get on with playing more pinball. For existing FX nerds, this will be a conflicting table: Either you'll love the mashup of best bits or wonder why it doesn't feel new.

OVERALL RATING: 4.0



### CRAZY MACHINES ELEMENTS

Publisher: DTP Entertainment • Developer: FAKT Software  
Price: \$10 • Platforms: PSN (Summer 2011), XBLA (Summer 2011)



The Crazy Machines PC series comes to consoles with Elements, a physics-based puzzler comparable to *The Incredible Machine*. Each complicated puzzle has a "simple" solution: Just place objects correctly to trigger a chain reaction of tipping, falling, exploding, or punching (yep, I said punching) to unlock the next stage. Nothing about Elements is particularly impressive, but it's a huge chunk of decent brain muscle-stretching that'll eat up Rube Goldberg enthusiasts' time like crazy.

OVERALL RATING: 3.5



# A-Z

# OF @GAMER RATINGS

IT'S TOO HOT!



CHILL OUT

| GAME/PRODUCT | ISSUE # | SCORE OUT OF 5 |
|--------------|---------|----------------|
|--------------|---------|----------------|

|                                       |    |      |
|---------------------------------------|----|------|
| The 3rd Birthday                      | 09 | 3.5  |
| Alice: Madness Returns                | 11 | 4.5  |
| Apache: Air Assault                   | 06 | 2.5  |
| Assassin's Creed Brotherhood          | 05 | 4.5  |
| Bewitched 3                           | 06 | 4.5  |
| Beyond Good & Evil HD                 | 09 | 4.5  |
| Brink                                 | 11 | 2.75 |
| Bulletstorm                           | 07 | 4.25 |
| Call of Duty: Black Ops               | 05 | 5    |
| Cars 2                                | 11 | 3.5  |
| Child of Eden                         | 11 | 2.75 |
| Chime: Super Deluxe                   | 10 | 4.25 |
| Conduit 2                             | 07 | 3.75 |
| Country Dance                         | 10 | 4    |
| Crazy Machines Elements               | 11 | 3.5  |
| Crysis 2                              | 08 | 4.5  |
| Dance Central                         | 05 | 4.5  |
| DanceMasters                          | 05 | 4    |
| Darkspore                             | 10 | 3.25 |
| DC Universe Online                    | 07 | 3.75 |
| de Blob 2 (PS3, 360, Wii)             | 07 | 3.75 |
| de Blob 2 (DS)                        | 08 | 4    |
| Dead or Alive Dimensions              | 10 | 4.75 |
| Dead Space 2                          | 06 | 4.25 |
| Def Jam Rapstar                       | 05 | 3.75 |
| DIRT 3                                | 10 | 4    |
| Disney Epic Mickey                    | 06 | 3.75 |
| Dissidia 012 (Duodecim) Final Fantasy | 08 | 3.75 |
| DJ Hero 2                             | 05 | 4    |
| Donkey Kong Country Returns           | 06 | 4.25 |
| Dragon Age II                         | 08 | 4    |
| Dragon Quest IV: Realms of Revelation | 08 | 4.25 |
| Dream Trigger 3D                      | 10 | 2.75 |
| Dungeon Defenders                     | 11 | 4.5  |
| Dungeon Siege III                     | 11 | 4    |
| Dungeons                              | 07 | 3.75 |
| Dungeons & Dragons: Daggerdale        | 10 | 3.75 |
| Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3            | 11 | 3.25 |
| EA Sports Active 2                    | 06 | 4    |
| Fable III (PC)                        | 11 | 4.5  |
| Fable III (Xbox 360)                  | 05 | 4.25 |
| Fallout: New Vegas                    | 05 | 4    |
| Fight Night Champion                  | 07 | 4.25 |
| Final Fantasy -V                      | 09 | 3.5  |
| Ghostbusters: Sanctum of Slime        | 09 | 3    |
| Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective        | 07 | 4.5  |
| God of War: Ghost of Sparta           | 05 | 5    |
| Gods Eater Burst                      | 08 | 4.5  |
| Golden Sun: Dark Dawn                 | 06 | 3.75 |
| Gran Turismo 5                        | 06 | 3.5  |

| GAME/PRODUCT | ISSUE # | SCORE OUT OF 5 |
|--------------|---------|----------------|
|--------------|---------|----------------|

|                                            |    |      |
|--------------------------------------------|----|------|
| Harry Potter/Deathly Hallows—Part 1        | 06 | 2.5  |
| Homefront                                  | 08 | 3.75 |
| James Bond 007: Blood Stone                | 05 | 3.75 |
| Just Dance 2                               | 06 | 4    |
| Killzone 3                                 | 07 | 4.5  |
| Kinect Adventures                          | 05 | 4.5  |
| Kinect Sports                              | 05 | 4    |
| Kingdom Hearts Re-coded                    | 07 | 4    |
| Kirby's Epic Yarn                          | 05 | 4.5  |
| Kung Fu Panda 2                            | 11 | 2.5  |
| L.A. Noire                                 | 10 | 4.75 |
| The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D    | 11 | 4.5  |
| LEGO Pirates of the Caribbean              | 10 | 4.25 |
| LEGO Star Wars III: The Clone Wars         | 09 | 3.75 |
| LEGO Universe                              | 05 | 3.75 |
| LittleBigPlanet 2                          | 06 | 4.5  |
| Lord of Arcana                             | 07 | 2.5  |
| Lost in Shadow                             | 06 | 4    |
| Mario Sports Mix                           | 08 | 3.5  |
| Mario vs. Donkey Kong: Mini-Land Mayhem!   | 06 | 4.5  |
| Marvel Pinball: Fantastic Four             | 11 | 4    |
| Mass Effect 2 (PS3)                        | 07 | 5    |
| Marvel vs. Capcom 3: Fate of Two Worlds    | 07 | 4.25 |
| Mayhem 3D                                  | 10 | 2.5  |
| Michael Jackson: The Experience            | 06 | 3    |
| Michael Jackson: The Experience (Xbox 360) | 09 | 3.5  |
| Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes HD          | 10 | 4.75 |
| Mindjack                                   | 07 | 2.5  |
| MLB 11 The Show                            | 08 | 4.5  |
| MLB 2K11                                   | 08 | 3.75 |
| Mortal Kombat                              | 09 | 4.5  |
| MotionSports                               | 05 | 3    |
| MotorStorm: Apocalypse                     | 10 | 3.5  |
| MX vs. ATV Alive                           | 10 | 2.5  |
| Nail'd                                     | 06 | 3.75 |
| NASCAR The Game 2011                       | 09 | 4    |
| Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit                | 05 | 4.25 |
| Okamden                                    | 07 | 4    |
| Operation Flashpoint: Red River            | 09 | 3.5  |
| Outland                                    | 11 | 4.25 |
| Pac-Man & Galaga Dimensions                | 11 | 4.25 |
| Papapop 3                                  | 10 | 3.75 |
| Plants vs. Zombies (DS)                    | 07 | 4.5  |
| PlayStation Move Heroes                    | 09 | 3.25 |
| Pokémon Black                              | 07 | 4.5  |
| Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs             | 05 | 4    |
| Pokémon White                              | 07 | 4.5  |
| Portal 2                                   | 09 | 5    |

| GAME/PRODUCT | ISSUE # | SCORE OUT OF 5 |
|--------------|---------|----------------|
|--------------|---------|----------------|

|                                           |    |      |
|-------------------------------------------|----|------|
| Pro Evolution Soccer 2011                 | 05 | 4    |
| Pro Evolution Soccer 2011 3D              | 10 | 3.5  |
| Raving Rabbids: Travel in Time 3D         | 10 | 2.75 |
| Rayman 3D                                 | 09 | 3.5  |
| Red Faction: Armageddon                   | 10 | 2.5  |
| Red Faction: Battlegrounds                | 10 | 2.5  |
| Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D         | 11 | 4.5  |
| Rift                                      | 09 | 4.5  |
| Rush'n Attack: Ex-Patriot                 | 09 | 3.5  |
| Samurai Warriors: Chronicles              | 09 | 3    |
| Shadows of the Damned                     | 11 | 4.25 |
| Shift 2 Unleashed                         | 09 | 4    |
| The Sims 3: Generations                   | 11 | 4    |
| The Sims 3: Late Night                    | 05 | 3.75 |
| The Sims Medieval                         | 09 | 4.5  |
| Sniper: Ghost Warrior (PS3)               | 11 | 3.5  |
| SOCOM 4: U.S. Navy SEALs                  | 10 | 3.5  |
| Sonic Colors (DS)                         | 06 | 3.5  |
| Sonic Colors (Wii)                        | 06 | 4.5  |
| Sonic Free Riders                         | 05 | 3.75 |
| Splatterhouse                             | 06 | 2.5  |
| Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II         | 05 | 3.5  |
| Super Mario All-Stars                     | 06 | 4    |
| Swarm                                     | 09 | 4    |
| Test Drive Unlimited 2                    | 07 | 2.5  |
| Thor: God of Thunder (DS)                 | 10 | 2.5  |
| Thor: God of Thunder (Wii)                | 10 | 2.5  |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters      | 09 | 3.75 |
| Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Shadow Wars     | 09 | 4    |
| Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X 2 (Wii)              | 06 | 2.75 |
| Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 3D             | 10 | 2.75 |
| Top Spin 4                                | 08 | 4.5  |
| Total War: Shogun 2                       | 09 | 5    |
| Trinity: Souls of Zill O'll               | 08 | 3    |
| TRON: Evolution                           | 06 | 2.5  |
| TRON: Evolution Battle Grids              | 06 | 3    |
| Two Worlds II                             | 06 | 4    |
| uDraw Game Tablet and Games               | 06 | 3.5  |
| Virtua Tennis 4                           | 10 | 3.5  |
| Warhammer 40K: Dawn of War II—Retribution | 08 | 4.5  |
| Warriors: Legends of Troy                 | 09 | 2.5  |
| Wii Party                                 | 05 | 4    |
| The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings         | 11 | 5    |
| World of Warcraft: Cataclysm              | 06 | 4.75 |
| WWE All-Stars                             | 09 | 2.5  |
| WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2011                | 05 | 4    |
| Yakuza 4                                  | 08 | 3.5  |
| Yostar 2 (Xbox 360)                       | 07 | 2.5  |
| Yostar 2 (PS3)                            | 07 | 3    |
| You Don't Know Jack                       | 06 | 4.5  |

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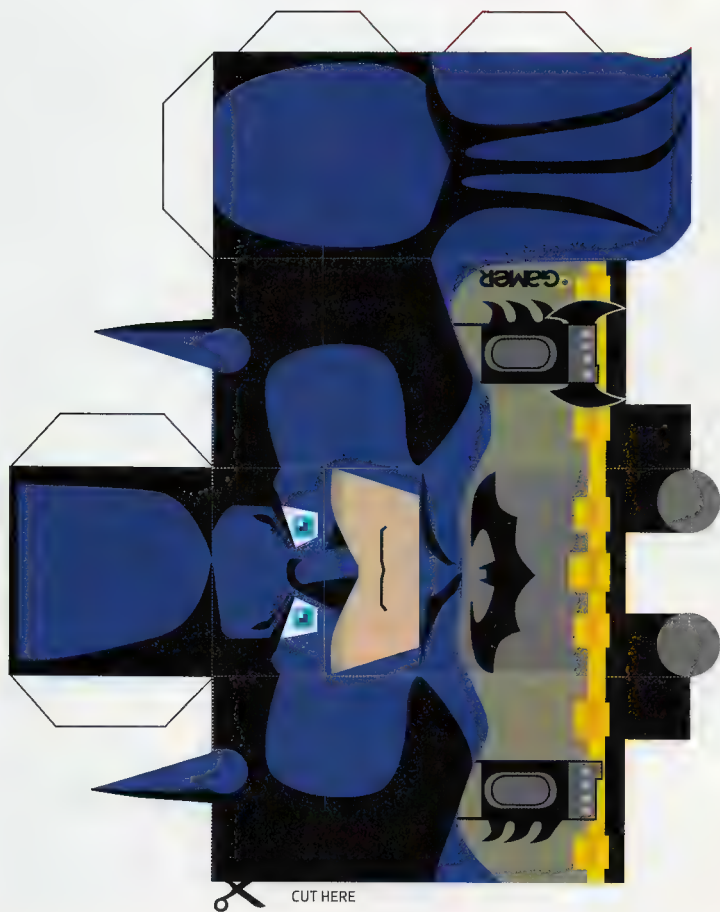
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# PAPERCRAFT

## BATMAN: **ARKHAM CITY**



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88



90

94





- 88** SHARP  
LC70LE732U  
70-INCH LCD TV
- 90** SONY XPERIA PLAY
- 92** THRUSTMASTER  
FERRARI WIRE-  
LESS GT COCKPIT  
430 SCUDERIA  
EDITION
- 93** RØXIO GAMECAP
- 94** KLIPSCH  
PROMEDIA 2.1  
SPEAKERS
- 95** NOX SPECIALIST  
& TURTLE BEACH  
P11 HEADPHONES

**STEVE SAYS:**

We've got a grab bag of hardware goodies this issue that run the gamut from a truly massive HDTV that will make your friends green with envy to a wireless self-contained racing wheel and Sony's long-awaited take on the smartphone. Plus, for good measure, we threw in a couple headsets and a device that lets you capture game video!



92



93



95



Photos: Mark Madeo &amp; Samantha Berg

**SHARP AQUOS  
70-INCH HDTV**Manufacturers: Sharp  
[www.sharp.com](http://www.sharp.com)

Price: \$2,969.99

\*\*\*\*\*  
**OVERALL SCORE: 4.5**

# SHARP AQUOS

## 70-INCH HDTV

Bigger really is better—especially when it comes to televisions! Words: William D'Neal

When I got word of Sharp's 70-inch AQUOS LC70LE752U 1080p LED-LCD HDTV my first thought was, "I have to get one of these for the man room." While, the prospect of being able to put one in my basement is unlikely, the good folks at Sharp did send us one to spend some time with in the @GAMER lab.

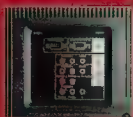
A few years ago the idea of getting your hands on a 70-inch LED LCD was obscene. Of course, this being the world of technology, what once was obscenely decadent is actually affordable just a few years later. Such is the case with Sharp's 70-inch AQUOS. I hooked this \$3,000 baby up to my Xbox 360 via one of the TV's four HDMI inputs. An Internet-ready TV, it not only sports an Ethernet port, but Wi-Fi as well. In addition to the Xbox I hooked it up to the office's Wi-Fi connection and used its built-in Netflix software to watch movies. While this is a cool feature, I'd rather watch Netflix through a console like the PS3 or Xbox 360 for the 5.1 surround sound decoding, something the AQUOS doesn't do on its own.

Of course, I'm in it for the games. I fired up *Mortal Kombat* and the battles looked truly epic on the 69.5-inch diagonal screen. Shooters also looked great. The thing about a display this large is that you really can see details that you may miss on a smaller display. This was extremely helpful in a game like *Operation Flashpoint: Red River*, where most of the combat takes place at rather long distances. Of course, a TV this large needs a room that's big enough.

There has been some critical talk about image quality with this TV but I found it pretty easy to tweak the settings to my liking. This model uses Sharp's UltraBrilliant LED technology and was plenty bright even in a room with a lot of light.

If you're in the market for a large TV for gaming and sports you'll love this one. Just be sure your partner knows how big it is before it shows up at the door.

This TV has enough ports to accommodate anything you care to hook up to it: Four HDMI, HD component, composite audio/video, PC, and Ethernet.





# XPERIA PLAY

A pure gaming phone Words: Kyle Orland

The revolution in touch-screen smartphones has brought gamers a lot of unique new experiences, from *Angry Birds* to *Flight Control*. But smartphones come up short when it comes to games designed for the buttons and control pads that have been a traditional part of gaming for decades. Virtual, onscreen buttons can help fill in the gap, but they take up valuable screen space and can't recreate that crucial, tactile feedback under your thumbs.

Enter the Xperia Play, a full-featured, Android 2.3-powered phone whose touch screen slides up to reveal a familiar PlayStation-style D-pad and button arrangement, complete with two shoulder buttons and a specially shaped touchpad in place of dual analog sticks. The unit can play all of the hundreds of standard Android games—including some specially designed to take advantage of those buttons—as well as chosen downloadable classics from the original PlayStation library.

It's a best-of-both worlds setup, highlighted by a set of seven prepackaged games that show just how much value real buttons bring to smartphone gaming. There are already dozens of additional titles designed for the Play available for download in the Verizon market, though a lack of demos and prices that tend toward the high end (for mobile games) might give potential purchasers pause.

There's no killer app yet to make you forget about your Nintendo DS or PSP, and continued support from a wider range of developers is going to be necessary to flesh out the available library of games. That said, phone buyers who value a good D-pad over a physical keyboard could find the Xperia Play provides just the kind of always-in-pocket gaming-and-phone device they've always wanted. **B**

**The Xperia Play comes preloaded with seven titles, and all but Tetris make use of the slide-out buttons.**

- Asphalt 6: Adrenaline (Racing, Gameloft)
- Bruce Lee Dragon Warrior (Fighting, Digital Legends)
- Crash Bandicoot (PlayStation classic platforming, Naughty Dog)
- Madden NFL 11 (Sports, EA Sports)
- Star Battalion (3D shoot-em-up, Gameloft)
- The Sims 3 (Casual, EA)
- Tetris (Casual, EA)



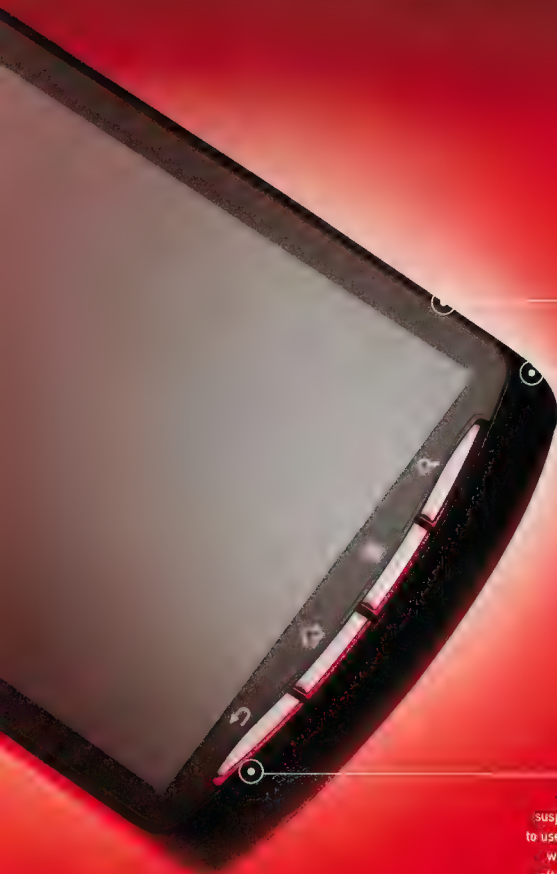
Being an Android phone means easy access to Maps, Google Talk, and Flash content on the web. Being exclusive to Verizon's network means those services can be a little spotty, depending on your location.

The Play's 4-inch, 854x480 screen can quite compete with the iPhone 4s, but the system pushes enough polygons to match lower-end PSP games. The touch screen can be a little touchy, though.

You won't win any awards taking shots with the 5 megapixel camera—or the low-res VGA camera on the other side—but they're useful for capturing and sharing moments throughout your day.



The Xperia Play's PlayStation-styled buttons are satisfyingly clicky, and make playing everything from sports games to racers to platformers a joy over traditional smartphones. Finding the correct thumb positions on the analog touchpad is a bit tougher, but at least your digits won't be blocking the screen.



The 16mm thick Play feels a tad bulky in a pocket, but that extra space provides plenty of room for your index fingers to rest on the comfortable and useful shoulder buttons.

Games automatically suspend when you back out to use other phone functions, which you might be doing often because notifications of things like emails and text messages don't show up visually while you're playing.

#### XPERIA PLAY

Manufacturer:  
Sony Ericsson  
[www.sonyericsson.com](http://www.sonyericsson.com)  
Price: \$199.99

OVERALL SCORE: 3.75





# THRUSTMASTER WIRELESS GT F430 COCKPIT CONTROLLER

Manufacturer: Thrustmaster  
www.thrustmaster.com  
Price: \$249.99

OVERALL SCORE: 5



The rubberized wheel rocks sequential up and down gearshift levers, and all the requisite PS3 buttons.

The metal pedals are modeled after those in the Ferrari 430 Scuderia.



## THRUSTMASTER WIRELESS GT F430 COCKPIT CONTROLLER

Slick meets convenience Words: Wil O'Neal

We love our racing games here at **@GAMER**. While the best way to play racing games is with a wheel, a major issue with racing wheels is how you set them up. While most PC gamers do so at a table or desk, where you can easily install a racing wheel, console gamers typically are seated on a couch or a chair.

Thrustmaster's Wireless GT F430 Scuderia Edition Cockpit Controller aims to solve that problem. It's essentially a self-contained racing cockpit that sits squarely on the floor.

The base is wide and weighted, and not once did it slip during my testing. Plus it's foldable, so the missus doesn't have to stare at it in the living room, and fully adjustable. You can change the angle based on your seating position, and also extend or shorten the steering column.

The wheel sports a 2.4GHz wireless radio (a USB dongle connects to either your PS3 or a Windows 7 or Vista PC) and while the transmitter boasts a range of up to 10 meters, I doubt that anyone is gonna want to sit that far away

from the screen while they use it.

The wheel is powered by four AA batteries, and while the battery life is good (Thrustmaster says you can expect up to 50 hours of gameplay) I would have preferred a standard rechargeable setup that connected to the system via the USB port.

The system lacks force feedback, but in all honesty I'm not sure how much of a fan of that I am anyway. Simply put, this is a great wheel that dedicated racing fans will love to take with them on their victory laps. **A-**

The base is nice and heavy, and in my tests it stayed right where it should.

# ROXIO GAMECAP

Those aren't special effects • Words: Lizzie Cuevas

I love bragging rights, and being able to show off my 1337 gaming expertise to my friends over YouTube would put me in pwnage heaven. That's what the Roxio GameCap lets you do. With a single component video and audio input, you can plug in your 360, PS3, or Wii and capture heated multiplayer sessions, competitive speed runs,

your own machinima, and whatever else your inner videogame nerd can think of.

Kudos aside, Roxio needs to polish up its skills before I can really show off mine. This PC-only device offers only a limited amount of video formats to which you can export: WMV, AVI, and DIVX. The included software is

pretty easy to pick up and capture video with a click of a button, but the video output is highly compressed and often glitches out with black frames, and the audio output tends to warp. With these obvious problems, anyone really serious about creating cool game videos will want a more reliable, higher-end option. **C**



A single component video input lets you plug in your 360, PS3, or Wii for capture.



Plugs right into your computer via USB. No additional power is needed.



## ROXIO GAMECAP

Manufacturer: Roxio  
[www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)

Price: \$99.99

OVERALL SCORE: 2



out to view  
capturing on the big  
screen

Software is included to  
capture video and edit  
it into it a (possibly)  
cinematic masterpiece.

PROMEDIA 2.1  
SPEAKERSManufacturer: Klipsch  
www.klipsch.com

Price: \$154.99

OVERALL SCORE: 4



The speaker-mounted bass/volume controls and line-in input/headphone jack are handy.



The wire inputs for the satellites scream "old school," but in a comforting way.

The subwoofer is mighty, indeed, but how about a remote already, Klipsch?

## PROMEDIA 2.1 Speakers

Klipsch pushes the limits of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" • Words: Steve Klett

This set of speakers definitely has a long shelf life going for it—nearly 10 years now with only minor cosmetic changes to the overall design. After spending a few days using them to rattle the windows and scare the neighborhood cats, it's clear why they've "stayed the course": They sound freakin' awesome.

Everything from the harsh staccato bursts of machinegun fire in *Black Ops* to the ear-soothing elegance of *Fable III*'s background music (and my rock, pop, and classical tracks) sounded crisp, full, and clear. The unit's 200 total watts of power is more than ample to fill a moderate-sized office, den, or game room—

and the subwoofer module really impressed me with deep sustained lows and stellar performance with "big bangs" in games.

If you want a solid 2.1 speaker system that can handle anything you throw at it, and that's built to last, the ProMedias are well deserving of a good, long listen. **B**

# HEADSET HAVEN ↘

Solid can options for on-the-go and couch-bound gamers on a budget • Words: Steve Klett

Don't have the clams for a set of \$1 head-phones? No problem: Turtle Beach's new Ear Force P11s are a great low-cost option for PlayStation 3-owning gamers.

If mobile gaming is what you find yourself doing these days, and you have a tad more cash to spend, then NOX Audio's Specialist cans are worth a listen, too.

## TURTLE BEACH P11

For the price you really can't go wrong with this set, which hits all the basic checkpoints for a solid set of gaming headphones: quality stereo sound with chat capabilities and separate in-line controls; large comfy ear cups housing powerful 50mm drivers that deliver quality sound; and a flexible mic that "does the job."

## NOX SPECIALIST GAMING BUNDLE

The Specialist's padded over-ear cups make it comfortable for marathon gaming sessions. The flexible mic can be retracted into the left ear cup, and the right ear cup sports a large volume control knob. The sound is very good with games, but a bit "muddy" and average with other media, such as movies. Ⓞ

Just fold up the Specialists and pop 'em in the included case!



The inline control pod provides independent volume controls for game and chat audio.

Everything you need to use the Specialists with your console of choice is included in the Gaming Bundle.

## NOX SPECIALIST

Manufacturer: Nox Audio  
[www.nox-audio.com](http://www.nox-audio.com)

Price: \$99.99

OVERALL SCORE: 3.75



## EAR FORCE P11

Manufacturer: Turtle Beach  
[www.turtlebeach.com](http://www.turtlebeach.com)

Price: \$59.99

OVERALL SCORE: 4.5



Words: Steve Klett



If you have some videogame "facts" you want to verify as real or urban legend, ask Andy: Send your questions to [andy@algamevmagazine.com](mailto:andy@algamevmagazine.com).

# Zelda Links

If you think I've exhausted the milestones and anniversaries for notable game icons (id Software, Blizzard Entertainment, and Sonic the Hedgehog have been topics of recent "Truth or Lies" installments), you should think again.

It's hard to believe, but the first *Legend of Zelda* game was released back in 1986—so Princess Zelda, Link, Ganon, and the rest of the Hylians (which is what the encyclopedia at [Zelda.com](http://Zelda.com) says people from Hyrule should be called) have been roaming our game consoles for 25 years. Funny, they don't look that old.

In tribute to them, this issue's "Truth or Lies" is dedicated to trivia revolving around this award-winning game franchise. And be sure to check out @GAMER's review of the latest *Zelda* chapter, a 3DS remake of *Ocarina of Time*, on page 67. ○



## TRUTH OR LIES:

*I saw the trailer a while ago for an upcoming live-action Legend of Zelda movie, and I can't freakin' wait! Do you have any information on when it's coming out? Please tell me it's soon...*

### LIES

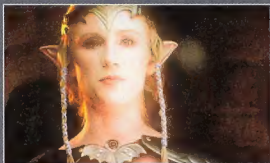
Doh. Sorry to say, but you got caught in a prank like so many others. But what a cool prank it was.

In spring 2008, the online gaming website IGN posted a nearly three-minute-long trailer that was so elaborate and convincing—filled with flaming-sword fights and a pointy-eared guy wearing a trademark green tunic—that many overlooked the fact that the clip was posted on April 1, and that it closed with the promise of an April 1, 2009 release date. The disappointment was immense when the site revealed the ruse the next day (along with a making-



of video), and even more than three years later, the IGN and YouTube pages housing the trailer are still seeing fresh comments expressing both excitement at the prospect of this film's release and enormous upset over the realization that it was a well-crafted joke.

The trailer does show the potential for a *Zelda* movie that could indeed capture the thrills, adventures, and fantasies of the game franchise, and maybe someday Nintendo will support or even spearhead such an effort. Alas, for now, my intrepid readers, it's not meant to be.



Comedian/actor Robin Williams has a daughter named Zelda, and my best friend says that she's named after Princess Zelda from the Nintendo games. It seems hard to believe that a big celebrity like him would do that.

### TRUTH

As it turns out, your friend is right on the mark. Williams has said in numerous interviews that his oldest son Zach suggested the name for his younger sibling after playing a *Zelda* game. In fact, Williams has said on many occasions that he's an avid gamer, and he does a routine about being the recipient of trash talk from a rabid 10-year-old during *Call of Duty* matches.

And *Zelda*—who turns 22 on July 31—is apparently a hardcore gamer in her own right: In a 2008 online interview, she talked about her interest in *Katamari Damacy*, as well as such shooters as *Halo 3* and *Call of Duty*. I guess you could say that the shell casing doesn't fall far from the assault rifle.



➤ Zelda Williams keeps her trigger fingers warm as she enters a *Call of Duty: Black Ops* launch party held last November.



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